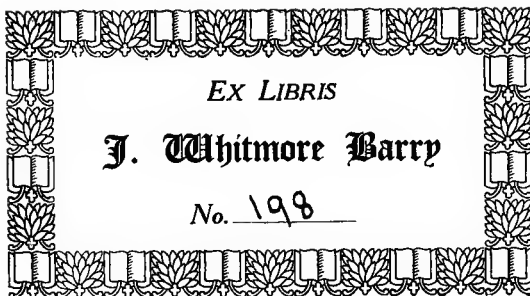


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AN AMERICAN AUTHOR



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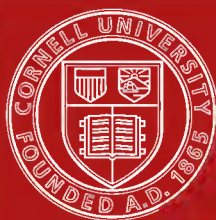
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MISTRESS NAN

PLAYS AND POEMS BY AN AMERICAN AUTHOR



FREDERIC WALTER NORCROSS

TO her who is more to man than wife,
Or sister, father, brother:
I dedicate these Plays and Poems,
To my best friend—my mother.

PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR BY
THE CHISWICK PRESS

1902

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- 1902 -

FREDERIC WALTER NORCROSS

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EXPLANATION

This is a private edition of a few hundred copies.

The author is a Philadelphia journalist.

At the age of 22 he wrote "Mistress Nan," a drama which attracted the attention of America's great emotional actress, Fanny Davenport.

Miss Davenport was enthusiastic over the merits of the work, declaring it to be "*the drama I have been looking for these ten years past.*"

As the actress had been producing the plays of Victorien Sardou, the world's greatest dramatist, this was a rare compliment to the young author on his first attempt at play-writing.

Fanny Davenport hastened to secure the play by contract and a date was set in November, 1898, for producing "Mistress Nan" at the Walnut St. Theatre, Philadelphia.

In the early fall of that year Fanny Davenport died, and as a result "Mistress Nan" was not produced.

Meanwhile "Hadley," a play of a very different character, was written. In some respects it is superior to its predecessor. Marie Burroughs pronounced it "*a most interesting play;*" and W. N. Lawrence, manager of Daniel Frohman's Lyceum Theatre, New York City, wrote of it: "*If my opinion is worth anything, it is a good play.*"

Both dramas appear in this volume.

The poems were written at odd intervals.

This book is presented, (1) with the hope of awakening the theatrical world to recognition of the dramatic merit of the plays; (2) to possibly impress the literary world with the fact that all authors do not sit in high places, and (3) to draw a tear or a smile and possibly give a little encouragement, or (at the least) an interesting half hour to some friend perusing these pages.

Fac-Simile of Fanny Davenport's Contract for "Mistress Nan."



MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

made and entered into this second day of March, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight, by and between FREDERIC W. NORCROSS, party of the first part and FANNY DAVENPORT, party of the second part,

WITNESSETH:

That said parties, in consideration of the sum of one dollar by each to the other in hand paid, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, and other valuable consideration, agreed to and with each other as follows:—

FIRST: The party of the first part shall and will and hereby does grant unto the party of the second part and the said party of the second part accepts the sole and exclusive right, license and privilege to produce and represent or cause to be produced and represented in the United States, the play entitled "MISTRESS NAN," of which the said party of the first part is the author and proprietor, for and during the theatrical season of 1898-1899 commencing on or about the 1st day of November, 1898, and ending on or about the 1st day of April, 1899, on the following terms and conditions:—

SECOND: The said party of the second part shall and will pay to the said party of the first part, five hundred dollars, which said sum shall be on account of royalties to be paid by said party of the second part to the said party of the first part as hereinafter provided.

THIRD: The royalties for the license herein granted, shall be twenty dollars a performance and shall be paid by said party of the second part to said party of the first part on the day of the week following the week in which performances of said play are given under this agreement.

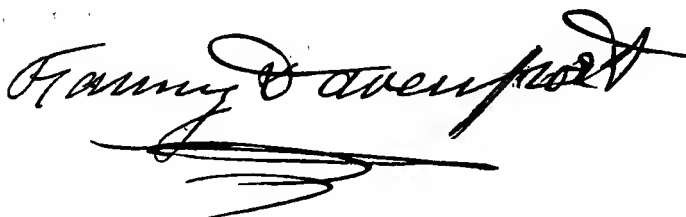
FOURTH: This agreement, on the request of said party of the second part shall be extended for the season of 1899-1900 on the same terms and conditions excepting that during said season, the royalty shall be fifty (\$50.) dollars for each performance, and on like request shall be extended for the season of 1900-1901, on the same terms and conditions excepting that during said last mentioned season, the royalty shall be one hundred dollars (\$100) for each performance; provided always, the said request is made by said party of the second part to said party of the first part in writing at least two months before the expiration of each season.

FIFTH: This agreement is made by the said party of the second part on the representation by said party of the first part, that the said play is an original play composed and written by the said party of the first part and is not taken from any printed book or work; that the said party of the first part is the sole and exclusive author and owner and that the title of said play is original with said party of the first part.

SIXTH: The said party of the first part shall and will, on the demand and request of the said party of the second part, protect the said play from any infringement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the parties hereto have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

IN THE PRESENCE OF

A large, elegant handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Fanny Davenport". The signature is written in a cursive style with long, sweeping strokes. Below the name, there are several horizontal lines of varying lengths, suggesting a flourish or the bottom of the signature.

The parties to the above agreement have, for the like consideration, FURTHER AGREED to and with each other, that the party of the first part shall and will, before selling or in any way disposing of the right to produce said play in the kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, offer to the party of the second part, the said right on the same terms and conditions as the party of the first part can secure from any other party; and if the said party of the second part shall accept said offer within fifteen days after receiving written notice thereof, she shall have the sole and exclusive right to produce said play in said Kingdom.

FANNY DAVENPORT.

A. J. DITTENHOEFER, Atty.

(NOTE.—At the request of Mrs. MacDowell, I consented to change the royalties for the third season from \$100 for each performance to 10 per cent. of the gross receipts; my faith in the success of "Mistress Nan," being so great that I believed it would amount to the same thing. Miss Davenport's lawyers informed me that \$100 a performance was a larger royalty than she ever paid Sardou for La Tosca, Cleopatra, or Gismonda.—F. W. N.)

MISTRESS NAN

(A DRAMA OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION IN 3 ACTS)

Publishers, Play Producers, Dramatists, Amateurs, and others, are warned not to use all or any part of this play without permission of the author. This book is covered by copyright: MISTRESS NAN is protected by copyright, and Act III has its own copyright. Any who disregard this warning will have to pay damages on the infringement of *three* copyrights.

Address all communications to *F. W. NORCROSS, 3141 No. Broad St., Philadelphia, Pa.*

AUTHOR'S NOTE:—The battle of Camden, fought August 16th, 1780, scattered the American army under General Gates, leaving South Carolina helpless under British domination. The play is based upon a slight historical incident which occurred a few days after the battle.

CAST.

COLONEL ARLEY WILDE, CAPTAIN AMOS HAWLEY, SIR TOBY FILLIP, SIR ANTHONY BAXTER, LIEUTENANT JONES, LIEUTENANT FARADAY,	}	<i>In His Majesty's Service.</i>
---	---	----------------------------------

GEORGE SANBORN, *a patriot serving in the Carolina Militia.*

OSPREY, *a patriot spy in the British ranks.*

SERGEANT,

MESSENGER,

TOBY, EZRA, PAUL,	}	<i>servants,</i>
-------------------------	---	------------------

DOROTHY, *Nan's sister,*

NELL, PEGGY,	}	<i>Nan's cousins,</i>
-----------------	---	-----------------------

MISTRESS NAN.

*British soldiery, cavalrymen, negroes,
patriot soldiery, etc.*

ACT I.—*The Hall in Willington Manor, near Camden,
South Carolina.*

ACT II.—*The same. (The following evening.)*

ACT III.—*Three hours later.*

TIME, 1780.

[To those unacquainted with the stage let me explain that the letters and figures which appear throughout the plays, signify the portion of the stage the actor is to take as he faces the audience; R. is *right*; L., *left*; C., *center*; C. B., *center back*; R. 1 E., *right first entrance*; L. 1 E., *left first entrance, etc.*]

ACT I.

SCENE.—*A richly furnished colonial hall of the Revolutionary period. Broad, high casement at C. B. with curtains pushed wide. Visible gallery extending across stage above, with stairway leading down at R. Broad fireplace with burning logs and high mantel at L. L. 1 E., a hallway; table at L. C.; small cabinet at L. 1 E. containing two pistols; curtains before doorway L. 2 E.; door R. 1 E.*

(*NELL and PEGGY at open casement, c., gazing off R. DOROTHY at L. C. Drum beats in distance off R. B.*)

NELL. They are coming, Dorothy.

DOR. (*indifferently*). I hear them.

PEG. (*clapping hands*). Look, Nell—See the long line of red-coats as they file from out the wood. La, but I do love soldiery.

DOR. I like not your British.

NELL. (*over shoulder*). Fie, Dot, you are a rebel.

PEG. (*shaking head with comic seriousness at DOR.*) Alack; were Armand Osprey on the British side, our Dot would shout the loudest for the King.

DOR. (*pettishly*). And rightly so! My head can't understand one-half of what 'tis all about. But this I know; King George now fights against my Osprey; so why, girls, should I love King George?

(*Faint galloping of hoofs off R. B.*)

PEG. (*at window, joyously*). They are coming, girls.

NELL. (*waving kerchief from casement*). Bravo!

DOR. (*going up and seizing NELL's wrist*). Don't, Nell! 'Tis bad enough that we must welcome them within the house. See their poor prisoners.

NELL. A ragged lot, I call them. Some have no shoes, much less a uniform.

PEG. (*excitedly*). Look, Nell! Look, Dot! 'Tis Colonel Wilde who rides across the field! How gallantly he sits his horse. See, he doffs his hat.

NELL. (*rapturously*). Oh, Heavens—what a figure! There! He is a man who suits me well, and a gentleman withal—Oh! (*exclamation from PEGGY and NELL*).

DOR. (*quickly*). What now, girls?

PEG. He kissed his hand.

DOR. (*primly coming down c.*). Then he is *not* a gentleman. His manners are bold.

NELL. (*aside to PEG at window*). Dot cares not for them, but *I* do. Just think, Peg, to have a dozen British in the house at once!

PEG. (*facing NELL anxiously*). Are my ribbons straight?

NELL. Yes, dear—and mine?

PEG. Perfect. (*galloping louder off R. B.*). Alack, Nell, I know I'll fall in love. I never could resist their uniform. (*coming down c. and clasping DOR. around waist*). Put on a cheerful face, dear Dot, for Nan, you know, would have us receive them well.

DOR. (*sighing*). Why is Nan such a Tory?

NELL. (*at window, waving kerchief*). 'Tis all the fashion since the defeat of Gates at Camden. A fool is he who don't shout with the victor.

DOR. (*with spirit*). But Nan acts not that way. Her loyalty has been no secret from the first. We have entertained the British since they came to Carolina.

PEG. (*at casement*). They're here, girls. La, what a show they make! (*DOR. joins girls at casement. PEG and NELL wave kerchiefs. Galloping ceases off R. Noise of men's voices and stamping hoofs. TOBY enters L. 2 E., crosses stage and exits R. 1 E.*)

(*Enter CAPT. HAWLEY, SIR ANTHONY BAXTER, and LIEUTENANTS JONES and FARADAY at R. 1 E. Ladies curtsy as officers bow.*)

CAPT. H. Sweet mistresses, we crave your hospitality. We know of old that that which Willington affords is of the best. The virtues and beauty of its charming hostesses are known throughout the army.

DOR. (*curtsying*). At my sister Nan's command, the hospitality of Willington is yours.

CAPT. H. And not at your command, sweet mistress?

DOR. At Willington, my sister's wishes are my own. In her name I bid you welcome. (*curtsys.*)

NELL. (*archly to SIR ANTHONY*). Mistress Nan is not the only one who loves the scarlet uniform.

SIR A. Is't so? I swear I'll wear the uniform through life if you say that!

LT. JONES (*who, with FARADAY, is pressing PEG with compliments*). Indeed, you have grown prettier!

LT. F. (*with broad English accent*). Upon my life 'tis true; upon my life.

PEG. (*in kittenish manner*). La, gentlemen, I'll not believe a word you say.

CAPT. H. (*to DOR.*). Colonel Wilde further begs permission to use your stables for our prisoners.

SIR A. (*laughing boisterously*). Wilde begs permission. Faith—that's good! If I mistake not, Hawley, the prisoners are quartered there already.

CAPT. H. (*severely*). Sir Anthony, your tongue is apt to tattle. Pray put a check to it. (*to DOR.*) Think you that Mistress Nan can spare the stables?

DOR. (*resignedly*). I dare say, Captain, she would spare her house and lands and servants; and walk barefoot, methinks, if once convinced that it would serve the King. I dare say, also, that Sir Anthony is right about Colonel Wilde.

CAPT. H. He is a rough soldier, Mistress, but a good one. The man seems made of iron and for hard service we have no better officer in all the army. Wilde has two enemies—the bottle and his good "friend," Gowan. To consort with either sends a man to quick perdition.

NELL. We have heard reports of Colonel Gowan.

PEG. (*with horrified schoolgirl emphasis*). I hear he hangs his prisoners.

SIR A. Faith, that is the least of all his sins.

LT. F. (*laughing*). Upon my life, 'tis true—upon my life!

DOR. He is a cruel, wicked man. I trust we'll never see his face at Willington.

SIR A. Faith, mistress, your trust is doomed to disappointment, for Gowan joins us here with his detachment.

DOR. (*horrified*). What! That monster here?

CAPT. H. (*to SIR ANTHONY*). Sir Anthony, again your tongue is indiscreet. (*to DOR.*) Mistress, be not alarmed. We march immediately when Gowan comes. Go to your room and you will never see his face. 'Tis good advice, I think. The fellow has a wicked eye for women.

SIR A. (*laughing*). Oh, virtuous Hawley! (*Looks off R. 1 E.*) But here is Colonel Wilde.

(*Enter COLONEL ARLEY WILDE.*)

WILDE. (*bowing slightly*). Ladies, your servant. (*crosses c.*) Hey—where is Mistress Willington? Does she not receive us? (*to DOR.*) Demme, Mistress Dot, you are improving. A pretty wench you have become. Keep away from my friend Gowan—he has a dangerous way with women, as you'll soon find. (*endeavors to touch DOR. familiarly under the chin.*)

SIR A. Faith the same words have scarce left Hawley's lips.

DOR. (*shrinking from WILDE*). My sister will shortly attend you here. She bade me give you welcome in her name.

WILDE (*coarsely*). Welcome? Curse these provincials with their airs. My thanks to Mistress Nan for not forbidding us the house. I would Gowan were here. He would break her haughtiness. Demme, but Gowan would break anything. What devil's work is he at now, I wonder?

SIR A. Ogling a pretty woman, 'tis like enough.

LT. J. Or pilfering an honest rustic.

LT. F. Burning a church, upon my life!

SIR A. Or at his favorite pastime of hanging some poor provincial.

CAPT. H. And beastly drunk, at whatever game he plays.

DOR. (*to CAPT. H.*). I dare say Nan will welcome him for all. His uniform will blind her to his sins.

WILDE. (*to DOR.*). Demme, 'tis her one redeeming feature. Mistress Nan is the hottest of your Tories.

SIR A. Faith, I believe she would wade through fire for the cause.

CAPT. H. Her zeal is known, and makes her much admired in the army. I myself have heard Cornwallis speak of her as the most charming belle in all Carolina.

WILDE. Demme, I put no trust in women. Their weakness is a snare to draw men on. Their prejudices govern reason; they gossip, gad and live on scandal. Their wills are weak, but as for temper—Gods! Their tempers wave and burn beneath a mild exterior to burst like twenty magazines all in a moment.

CAPT. H. Your ignorance of women is profound. But for the humor of it, the ladies would be shocked at such ungallant speech.

WILDE. But I'll admit that Mistress Nan is loyal. What was the story that passed around the mess? Something about a lover, was it not? She jilted him when he took arms against the King.

CAPT. H. Fie, Wilde! The subject is scarce fit for present company.

NELL. Nay, we do not mind. The tale is true, and caused much gossip. Our family all knew George Sanborn well, and Nan, methinks, cared more for him than any other. Yet when he took the rebels' side, his chances went like smoke. She would see naught of him from that day on, and swore that were he dying at her feet, she would not stoop to give him aid.

DOR. Yet, Nan owes him much. He saved her life some ten years back.

SIR A. And how came that?

DOR. Her little boat upset upon the Wateree. She screamed, the water filled her mouth and eyes. There was a fearful gulping in her throat; the noise of twenty storms within her ears. She rose and sank again, and was for going down once more when suddenly there came a shout and plunge. It was George Sanborn leaping from the bridge. *He saved her life.*

NELL. Alack—what gentleman could do otherwise? He was there; he could swim. His handsome coat alone suffered from the bath. It was no great matter.

DOR. (*to NELL*). The matter was great enough for Nan.

WILDE. And yet, she jilted him? Curse me, that is a woman's gratitude!

DOR. You mean her *loyalty*. And yet, methinks my sister loves George Sanborn.

WILDE. What? Mistress Nan of Willington in love with a damned rebel? Impossible!

DOR. Nay; not so impossible as you think. But three days back, when the news of Camden's battle came, her joy at the British victory was checked all of a sudden. She questioned the messenger of those who fell on the rebel side, and when he said their officers were lying thick upon the field, she suddenly became morose and went up to her room. I found her there in tears, and, (though she did not know I saw), a miniature of George Sanborn was clasped within her hand.

WILDE. What happened then?

DOR. On seeing me she became herself all in a moment, and sweeping down the stairs, ordered the greatest feast that Willington had known for years. That night we had all the neighborhood to dine, and my sister, more brilliant and beautiful than e'er before, was toasting the British victory.

WILDE. A strange method of mourning for one's lover. (*Laughter. The group draw nearer casement laughing and chatting. WILDE and SIR A. come down L. by fireplace.*) (*Aside to SIR A.*). Curse me, I wonder where friend Gowan is?

SIR A. Within an hour's march of the Wateree ere this.

WILDE. (*flushed with wine, to SIR A.*). We wagered last night across our wine; a devil's wager, too, but one in which two merry devils were engaged. My Gowan says: "By all the Gods I know of, Wilde, there is but one woman in Carolina worth the winning." And laughing across my glass I said: "Mistress Nan of Willington." "Even so, Mistress Nan," replied my Gowan; "she has too much of that demmed inconvenient quality the world calls Virtue. What say you if we try our arts upon the wench?" "A merry game," I shouted, and then as we drank to our success, it was arranged that the man

who won the beauty was to pay the other a crown, to console him for his loss. No sooner was the wager made than Gowan was called away to do some work beyond the river. Demme the man swore lustily, for I stood there and shouted after him, "Hola, my Gowan, wilt take the crown now or when you arrive at Willington?" And he replied: "Win her to-night, friend Wilde, for to-morrow when I arrive, I'll use persuasion that will bring the beauty to terms within an hour." At which he rode away and that in humor which boded ill for rebels whom he met. (*aloud, impatiently*). But, demme, is Mistress Nan never coming down?

(*Enter MISTRESS NAN in gallery above.*)

DOR. My sister is coming now.

NAN. (*on stairway*). Welcome, gentlemen, to Willington! The day well honors us that brings King George's troops to our poor homestead! (*officers, excepting WILDE, bow low.*)

WILDE (*surlily*). Mistress, we have had to wait some minutes for your welcome.

NAN. (*smiling*). I crave your pardon for it. If I delayed, 'twas but to make myself more fit to meet this gallant company.

WILDE. Your speech is good; I would your actions were as well. I have some doubts of welcomes which are long delayed.

NAN. (*with a touch of haughtiness*). If Colonel Wilde believes he is not welcome, I shall not press him to remain.

CAPT. H. (*quickly*). Mistress, you are unjust. You will not censure us for being angered at your absence? Methinks our Colonel's impatience is somewhat of a compliment.

NAN. (*extending hand to WILDE*). There, Colonel, I freely ask forgiveness. 'Tis well you have a Captain to make such gallant interpretation of your speech. (*smiles at CAPT. H.*) I admit the compliment was somewhat clouded, and my poor head failed to receive it. But there, my error and your flattery are clear at last.

WILDE (*aside*). Curse it; a bad beginning. (*aloud, kissing NAN's hand gallantly*). Mistress, friend Hawley's speech is but too true; for Arley Wilde is patient of no other company when the peerless Mistress Nan is near. A smile from her will banish the longest campaign.

NAN. (*with animation*). Yes, tell me of the campaign! The rebels are all scattered; are they not? Alack, you must be inconsolable.

WILDE. Inconsolable, why so?

NAN. (*surprised*). Why so? Because there are none left to fight! I would I were a man to wear a sword and meet the rebels.

CAPT. H. (*gallantly*). I'll wager they would be conquered at sight of you. (NAN *smiles*.)

NAN. Were I a soldier, I could wish to battle every day.

WILDE (*laughing*). Demme, Mistress, too much war, like too much of other things, will grow monotonous.

NAN. But, oh, it must be grand! The troops—the bright red uniforms—the rush of heavy cavalry—the pennants flying in the breeze—the music of the bands. Alack, the roar of battle must be sweet to soldier ears!

CAPT. H. A bullet hums a lively tune which may end in a dirge.

NAN. (*impatiently*). Faith, you'll convince me you are no soldiers. But for your reputations one would swear you loved not your profession. But tell me of the battle which cleared Carolina of the rebels. 'Twas a night attack at Camden; was it not? A guinea would I have given to see the rebels run.

CAPT. H. Run they did, and with good reason; our cavalry was behind.

SIR A. Nay—more than that. They were among them, like wolves amid a flock of sheep.

WILDE. And hacking at their heads. Demme, I never saw an army scatter so.

NAN. (*anxiously*). Think you the rebel power is broken in Carolina?

WILDE. I'll swear you cannot find a band within two hundred miles.

NAN. I am glad! I am glad! The insolents; they well deserve their beating! And to think that some of our best Carolina and Virginia families side with that crew of rebels! Out upon them all! Now, I'm for King George. My father knew the King, and was his friend. Alack, I have no patience with those who side against our monarch.

CAPT. H. Fair mistress, we are well convinced of that.

NAN. And the prisoners, Colonel? How many rebels do you take to Charleston?

WILDE. Two hundred, mistress; and curse me, a beggarly two hundred, too. You'll have to clean your stables after them. (*Laughter from officers.*)

NAN. They are well guarded?

WILDE. Five men can guard them now. We have naught to fear from an attack, for demme, there are no rebels left.

NAN. The stables are well enough for rebels. My house and its best entertainment I reserve for the King's brave officers. We will have a feast anon, in honor of the victory. Gentlemen, the best of Willington is yours, as well it should be. I ask but

one favor in return, and that is that there be no drinking in this hall. My father died in here and for five years it has not rung with merriment. But see, (*goes up pointing off L. 2. E.*) there is our goodly banquet room which is at your command. Toby will serve you there. He'll bring your wine and punch. Our cellars are well stocked, and as for punch, I've given orders it shall be at your service night and day. You see I know a soldier's habits well. Gentlemen, once more I bid you welcome to Willington. (*Curtsys L. c. Officers applaud.*)

CAPT. H. A peerless hostess!

LT. J. Egad I never saw another half so thoughtful.

LT. F. Upon my life 'tis true, upon my life!

SIR A. My first health shall be to thee, sweet Mistress Nan!

NELL. (*aside, plucking his sleeve*). Fie! You told me the very thing a moment since!

SIR A. (*to NELL*). I shall fill a double bumper and drink to both!

WILDE. Mistress, we accept your hospitality until friend Gowan comes. With him we march to Charleston with these prisoners. (*aside*) And curse me, much as I love my Gowan, the longer he stays this time the more I shall be satisfied. The wench is a hard one to approach. (*galloping of hoofs off R.*)

NAN. More soldiery? Who is it now? (*runs to casement and looks R.*)

SIR A. Gowan, I'll wager.

CAPT. H. More likely Sir Toby, whom we left beyond the river.

NAN (*looking from casement*). It is Sir Toby. Alack, he comes not a moment too soon to escape the storm. See how the clouds have banked themselves beyond the hilltops. (*stormy aspect without. NAN looking intently R. while leaning on sill of casement.*) What's that? Nay—'tis impossible! Yes; a woman rides strapped behind a trooper. (*turning to Wilde*) Alack, Colonel, do you make women prisoners?

WILDE. At times.

CAPT. H. Faith, mistress, 'tis they who generally capture us.

NAN. But not so now; and see, she is old. The ride is rough for one like her. (*galloping which has grown louder, ceases off R. 1 E. Voices.*)

(*Enter SIR TOBY FILLIP R. I. E.*)

SIR TOBY (*bending over NAN's hand*). Mistress Nan, I salute thee. Your pardon, ladies. (*crosses to WILDE at L. c. Aside*) The work is done, and done well. That rebel nest is gone.

WILDE (*aside to SIR TOBY*). You lost no men?

SIR T. Not one. They did not fight; they merely prayed to spare their homes.

WILDE. And then?

SIR T. (*laughing*). Then? Faith. I applied the torch and out they came like hornets—hornets, however, that have no sting. We left a few burnt logs and heaps of ashes. That rebel village will trouble us no more.

WILDE. Well done. And this prisoner?

SIR T. Egad, no prisoner. Merely a wretched gypsy we picked up on the road. (*turning to NAN*) Mistress Nan, with your permission I'll bring in my prize. Her trade is fortune telling.

OMNES. A gypsy?

SIR T. Aye—and an old hag at that. Egad, I thought her tricks would furnish amusement for the company.

PEG. La, I do want my fortune told.

NELL. And I.

NAN. Pray, bring her in, for this is sport indeed. I shall scold you anon, Sir Toby, for her rough treatment.

SIR T. Treatment? Egad, mistress, she is a witch and has no feeling.

NAN. She is a woman.

SIR T. Say rather an evil spirit; the stake is best for such. (*crosses to R. 1 E.*) Ho, there; bring her here!

(*Enter two soldiers in cavalry uniform with GEORGE SANBORN between them. SANBORN attired in female gypsy costume of bright, but worn colors. Hood or turban covers head, ears and face almost down to eyebrows. Walks with back bowed and face down holding flaps of hood so as to almost entirely conceal face. Assumes cracked voice of an old woman. Soldiers roughly thrust gypsy on at R. C. Roar of laughter from officers and clapping of hands from PEG and NELL.*)

WILDE. Ho, ho! A pretty object, truly! (*SANBORN staggers slightly, feigning exhaustion.*)

SIR A. The hag is weak.

SIR T. (*shaking gypsy's shoulder*). Curse you, stand up. We would have a lesson in deviltry.

SANBORN (*drawing away*). You need no lesson from me in that. (*laughter from officers.*)

CAPT. H. She touched you that time, Fillip. Upon my soul, the wench has wit.

DOR. Poor woman! Pray, take a seat.

SIR T. (*interfering*). No—no, the hag will stand before her betters.

WILDE. I would Gowan were here. He'd make some merry sport with her.

SIR T. Is't sport you want? There's nothing easier. Dance hag, or by my soul, your wrinkled hide shall feel the sword point. (*draws sword and pricks gypsy in folds of dress.* SANBORN *draws away.*)

DOR. (*grasping SIR TOBY'S sword blade*). No—no, 'tis cruel.

SIR T. (*trying to disengage blade*). Away, mistress, or you will cut those pretty fingers. (*WILDE laughs L. C.* SIR ANTHONY *has drawn sword at L. C., when NAN comes down c.*)

NAN. Enough. We do not like your sport, Sir Toby. It scarce befits a gentleman. (*SIR TOBY and SIR A. laugh and sheathe swords. To gypsy*). Do you tell fortunes, my good woman?

SAN. (*looking intently at NAN*). To those who will believe, sweet mistress.

WILDE. Then you will tell none here, for none believe your cursed prattle.

PEG. I do believe in her. I long to know my fate.

NELL. And I.

NAN. (*to PEGGY*). Come, Cous, put out your hand.

SIR T. And money.

PEG. La, I've not a coin about me.

SIR A. Allow me, then. (*gives coin to gypsy*). Come, wench, her palm is crossed with silver.

SAN. (*bending over PEGGY'S palm*). I see a home of splendor and a loving husband.

WILDE (*ironically*). Demme, they all see that!

PEG. (*eagerly*). Is he a soldier, gypsy? Alack, I'll marry none other than a soldier.

SAN. He is a soldier, Mistress Peg.

WILDE (*suspiciously*). Mistress Peg? How know you the girl's name, hag?

SAN. (*looking at WILDE and lifting hand*). The stars know everything, good sir.

WILDE. Fool, your stars are invisible now. I—

PEG. (*impatiently*). Do keep him quiet!

NAN. Hush Colonel, your speech breaks in on Peggy's future.

PEG. (*anxiously*). His uniform is red, is't not? I will not have him otherwise.

SAN. His uniform is blue, good mistress. He hates the red—as he abhors his country's enemies.

NAN. Shucks, Peg, I would have none of him. Your predictions are at fault, good witch.

SAN. (*to NAN*). Only to those who love not their country, Mistress.

NELL. 'Tis my turn now. (*pushes PEGGY aside*). Here is your coin. Read well, good gypsy, and you shall not want for more.

SAN. (*studying NELL's palm*). I see a doubtful future. Beware, mistress, of the flattery of men.

NELL. Alack, I like it.

SAN. It is your all-prevailing weakness. No good can come of such, and much harm may.

NELL. What further do you see?

SAN. I see no more.

SIR T. Egad, she is a weary prophetess. Her entertainment is but poor.

NAN. (*to DOROTHY*). Come, Dot, 'tis your turn now.

DOR. No, I'll not believe in witches' tales.

SAN. (*to NAN*). Then your's, sweet mistress?

NAN. (*surprised*). Mine? Alack, gypsy, I know it without your aid!

OMNES. Let's hear—let's hear!

NAN. (*with touch of melancholy*). My fate? It will be this! Mistress Nan, as she is known to you, will live and die at Willington, remaining Mistress Nan throughout. A man shall never feel caress of hers. She loves her country, King, and race of ancestors. This is all to her; 'tis faith, tradition, religion, one might say. In fact, her heart is sealed with loyalty. This is her fate as well I know. Her life may not be happy, but 'twill be a loyal one.

SAN. (*who has been studying NAN's face attentively*). Mistress, your prophecy is false. A better fate awaits a face so perfect: a heart so pure. Your hand, sweet mistress; I beg to see your hand.

SIR A. (*to WILDE*). Faith, the witch is moved. I thought she grew taller as she spoke.

NAN. (*with tinge of melancholy*). You cannot alter Fate, poor gypsy. (*gives hand to SANBORN, who eagerly examines it.*)

SAN. Who knows? Who knows? I see a different future, yet one that all these people may not hear. Mistress, sweet mistress, I beg an audience alone. (*presses NAN's hand to his lips.*)

NAN. (*smiling and removing her hand*). What? Leave my company to hear an idle tale? Not so.

SAN. Mistress, I beg—'tis an old woman's whim, and yet—(*aside to NAN*) I can read here of one you think much of. *His life is in great peril.*

NAN. (*startled*). Eh? (*laughing to cover her confusion and turning to WILDE*). The silly witch would tell my fortune to no other ears than mine. Alack, it must be disagreeable. Come, Colonel, 'tis your turn now.

OFFICERS. Yes, Wilde; let's hear your fortune.

WILDE. Demme, a soldier's fate is easily foretold. Too often his destiny lies in a bullet. But tell me what the stars say of friend Gowan? Hast heard of Gowan, hag?

SAN. (*vehemently*). Gowan! That dog, that cur who blots the face of our fair land with ruin! That beast who stops not at arson, murder or at rape. Aye, I know Gowan, and so does all Carolina in its curses. His end will be no good one.

WILDE (*seizing gypsy by throat*). Hag! Curb your cursed tongue when speaking of my Gowan! (*officers release gypsy*). I know his faults: I know his virtues. A braver man ne'er lived, nor better officer. War is stern, and Gowan is stern and cruel as war itself. He is a soldier, every inch of him.

CAPT. H. (*aside to NAN*). Our Colonel's manners never were too mild. He will not hear a word against his friend.

SIR T. Come Wilde, we all know Gowan, and curse me but the gypsy's portrait fits him well. He is no saint as all well know. (*to SAN*). Come, hag, a guinea for my fortune.

SAN. (*fiercely dashing money to floor*). Your fortune? I read in yours the fortune of your cursed cause. Ruin and death await both, and that most speedily. (*TOBY enters L. 2 E. and speaks to NAN aside*.)

WILDE (*furiously*). Arrest the woman!

NAN. (*coming down c.*). Nay, wait Colonel.

WILDE. I wait for *nothing*. Sergeant.

(*Enter Sergeant R. 1 E. and salutes*.)

NAN. (*haughtily*). Well then, have your will. Your refreshment awaits you in the room within. Let us adjourn to it without delay.

CAPT. H. (*to WILDE*). Wait, Wilde! (*to NAN*). Mistress the gypsy has offended and deserves arrest. Why would you have her spared?

NAN. (*innocently*). Alack, think you a woman is not curious? I long to hear the fortune she predicts for me. However, the Colonel wishes her arrest, and what the Colonel wishes must be done. (*curtsying to WILDE*). Your pardon for my interference.

WILDE (*irresolutely*). Not so, not so. I did but wish to give the wench a lesson.

SIR T. 'Tis ungallant, Wilde, to interrupt Mistress Nan's fair fortune.

LT. F. Upon my life 'tis true, upon my life.

CAPT. H. (*aside to WILDE*). Let her remain here while we feast within. She cannot get away.

WILDE (*aside*). Good. (*to NAN*) Mistress, Arley Wilde cannot command in thy sweet presence. (*to GYPSY*). I'll leave you here, then, hag; but curb your tongue when Gowan comes. He is a less gentle man than I and would hang you in a trice. Come, then; to the table!

NAN. Yes, yes.

SAN. (*aside to NAN*). You will return and hear me?

NAN. (*to SANBORN*). Yes, although I like not your predictions. (*to WILDE as he offers his arm*). I thank you Colonel for your favor. (*taking WILDE's arm and turning to company*). Come, gentlemen!

(*Exit ladies and officers L. 2 E., WILDE and NAN leading; NELL following with SIR T. and SIR A. CAPT. H. with DOR.*)

LT. J. (*to PEGGY*). Wilt take both of us, Mistress Peg?

PEG. (*effusively*). I would love to have you both!

LT. J. Nay, that could not be, for we would fight for ownership.

LT. F. (*laughing*). Upon my life, 'tis true, upon my life! (*Each take PEGGY's arm and exit laughing L. 2 E.*)

QUICK MUSIC.

SAN. (*approaches L. 2 E. stealthily. In natural voice*). The British hound. Your day of reckoning will come, and so will Gowan's. And now to escape, if such a thing is possible. (*quickly steals into hall L. 1 E. Re-enters stealthily.*) No passage there. (*goes up c. opens casement cautiously; looks through and closes it.*) Nor there. (*exit R. 1 E. stealthily and re-enters*). Nor there. (*straightens up to full height and throws back hood, revealing head and face*) A wicked trap, George Sanborn! It has a noose that fits your neck. (*looks toward L. 2 E. whence comes sound of laughter*). They'll search me when that feast is over. (*draws two pistols from beneath folds of dress and lays them on the table, L. C. Takes papers from dress*). These despatches must not be found. Let's think—let's think. Shall I destroy them? (*looks fiercely towards L.*) The British dogs shall not know of friend Marion. I'll read the things and then—the fire. (*looks toward fireplace L., quickly tears open and reads despatches. Laughter and tinkling of glasses off L. 2 E.*) I know them, and now—(*crosses to fireplace and holds papers irresolutely above flames*). Pshaw—I may escape. I'll save them till the moment of discovery has come. (*suddenly*). Am I not discovered now? What did that soldier whisper outside the door? (*looks R. 1 E.*) "A dangerous game, George Sanborn"—yes, that was it. That man knew me. I trembled 'neath my dis-

guise, but was the next moment cast in here. (*sound of merriment from L. 2 E. Fiercely*). The cursed Britons! (*pushes back folds of dress from arms to grasp pistols in hands.*) That banquet hall has several outlets, as I well know. A dash for liberty will throw that merry crowd in some confusion and may result in an escape. The chance is poor enough, but still remains a chance. (*about to rush off L. 2 E. pistols in hand.*)

NAN. (*off L. 2 E.*) Depend upon it, I'll not stay long.

SAN. (*suddenly checked by NAN's voice, allows hands to drop helplessly*). 'Tis she! (*pause, slowly*). Faith, I wonder if Nan will see me die. (*recovers and quickly conceals papers and pistols beneath dress, assuming bent position.*)

(*NAN enters L. 2 E.*)

WILDE (*off L. 2 E.*). Mistress, your absence takes the flavor from our feast. See, the wine no longer sparkles, and demme, the cookery has lost its taste.

STOP MUSIC.

NAN (*at L. 2 E. to those outside*). My sister and cousins will do the honors in my absence. I'll not remain from such guests, I promise you full well. (*curtsys and comes down c. as SAN. falls on knees before her*). Gypsy, I warn you not to keep me long. My friends will grow impatient.

SAN. (*assuming gypsy's voice, and kissing NAN's hand*). The sweetest hand in all Carolina.

NAN. (*aside, laughing*). A strange fortune teller, truly. (*aloud*). The palm has not as yet been crossed with silver.

SAN. I need no coin to read the future here. I read the woman's nature, strong and wilful; yet doubly gentle and sweet to those she loves. I read her past and future. I see a lover.

NAN. (*smiling*). What gypsy fails to see a lover? Come, I would test your prophecy. Describe the man.

SAN. He is a man well known to you in years gone by. A man who loves you heart and soul; who at this moment would give his hand to save you from the slightest pain; who would give his life and willingly, if the sacrifice would serve the woman his heart is set upon. A man who as a youth once risked his life to save your own. A man who now risks more than life—risks your displeasure—to save his country from its English foe. This man is your lover.

NAN. (*standing with hand to heart. Aside*). George Sanborn. (*to gypsy*). My good gypsy, I know of no such man.

SAN. (*impressively*). You know him not?

NAN. (*shaking head and smiling*). Alack, I never heard of such. He sounds like one we read of in the world of books. Perhaps you found him there?

SAN. (*gazing intently at NAN*). You do not know *George Sanborn*?

NAN. (*with pretence at meditation*). Sanborn? Let's see; methinks I've heard that name? Yes, I remember now. He joined the rebels, did he not? I knew him years ago.

SAN. (*aside*). Her indifference is too strongly put to be sincere. (*aloud*). Sweet mistress, handsome lips may be untruthful. The gypsy reads the heart your words belie. I see you weeping for him in your chamber.

NAN. (*with spirit*). I! Weeping for him in my chamber? Old woman, you are a fool. Faith I would have liked to see him run at Camden!

SAN. You know him better, Mistress. (*impressively*) Perhaps he was cut down.

NAN. (*indifferently*). Perhaps he was—who knows?

SAN. (*angrily*). Who cares? you mean! Proud beauty, do not cloak your feelings with your words.

NAN. (*mischievously*). Ah, but I do care. You know, in my chamber I weep for him.

SAN. Woman, proud, cruel, beautiful, I have no patience with your wit. But there, you have no heart.

NAN. (*smiling*). And yet, good gypsy; you read my nature but a moment since as strong, but sweet and gentle to those I love.

SAN. You do not love *George Sanborn*?

NAN. (*proudly*). Love? I, a *Willington*, love him who fights against his king and country? (*proudly*). My father knew *King George*.

SAN. Against his King for his country, Nan—sweet Mistress, I mean.

NAN. There is no such distinction. The King comes first, and so I told *George Sanborn* five years back when he wished to court the rebel cause and *Nan Willington* at once. (*with ironical feeling*). *George Sanborn* love me? I know 'tis false; for when man truly loves, he'd give his heart, his soul, his chance of Heaven for the woman of his dreams. And what did I require of him? His allegiance to his King. I foresaw this defeat which must attend a cause so reckless and disloyal. His answer was "My country first, although it breaks my heart"—His heart! He had no heart, for if he had, it would have held him fast to me. His country before me; did'st ever hear a man in love rave so? Out upon thee, witch, the wretch but won my favor to abuse it. He never loved me. (*turns away and brushes eyes with kerchief*).

SAN. (*tenderly*). Nan, Nan, did you love him so!

NAN (*recovering herself*). No—no—I never loved him. What have you betrayed me into, gypsy? There, I am quite calm now. (*with determination*). Believe me when I say I hate George Sanborn.

SAN. (*with arms extended imploringly*). No—no, do not say that!

NAN. (*fiercely*). Aye—and hate him the more since once I might have loved him.

SAN. (*drawing away from her with a pained expression*). Ah, well, it matters little. George Sanborn's time has come.

NAN. (*quickly*). What mean you, gypsy?

SAN. (*taking NAN's hand and pointing off L. 2 E.*). Listen! Go to their feast and drink a silent toast to him. He loved you well in life; he loves you now. Go, drink a toast to him.

NAN (*alarmed*). You speak in riddles.

SAN. George Sanborn is about to die. (*laughter and applause off L. 2 E.*)

NAN. (*quickly*). How know you that? Is George Sanborn sick, wounded? Where is he?

SAN. (*after going quickly to L. 2 E. and looking off*). Could you pass those sentries? (*points R.*)

NAN. Aye, with a word from Colonel Wilde.

SAN. Then get it. Quick, your cloak! I'll take you to George Sanborn.

NAN. (*sits at table L. c. meditating; then*). What you propose is foolish. I cannot leave my guests.

SAN. Then George Sanborn dies!

NAN. What proof have I of that?

SAN. My word.

NAN. It will not do.

SAN. His ring, then?

NAN. (*quickly*). You have his ring?

SAN. (*draws ring from finger*). It is here. (*gives ring to NAN, who examines it and passes it on her own finger.*)

NAN. (*laughing suddenly*). Gypsy, I see it now—it is a plot. He would have me meet him. He wants to plead before me on his knees. He wants me to forgive the man who fights against his King. His cause defeated in our colony, he wants my sympathy—perhaps my aid. (*fiercely*). Do they hunt him like a dog? Well, he chose his cause; he must abide by its rewards. Alack, dost think I'd shield him? No, no, my sympathy is dead. Were he here now and they all after him, I would point him out and say "there is your man!"

SAN. (*sitting in chair R. c. with downbent head*). George Sanborn asks naught of thee, Nan Willington!

NAN. (*at c. regarding him attentively; then suddenly with changed manner; gaily*). Come, gypsy, confess it is a ruse! Confess he is alive and well! Confess he bribed you to come to me with this sad tale. Come, come, let me see your face! (*grasps gypsy's shoulder*). Confess—confess! (*starts back suddenly; aside*). Alack! Now this is strange. (*aloud, crosses and falls on knees, pressing close to SAN as he sits R. c.*) Let's see your face—let's see your face! (*as SAN slowly lifts his head, she pushes away hood with both hands*). George Sanborn! (*NAN starts to feet looking toward L. 2 E.*) George Sanborn! Hush!

(*Enter CAPT. HAWLEY L. 2 E.*)

(*NAN presses back against SANBORN screening him from view. SANBORN quickly replaces head-covering.*)

CAPT. H. Mistress, we chafe at your delay. Your guests are waiting at the table, and that with much impatience. Methinks the gypsy keeps you long.

NAN (*trifle agitated*). Yes—yes—that is—. I pray you, Captain Hawley, convey excuses to my guests. I will be there anon.

CAPT. H. (*aside*). Is there some plotting here? (*aloud*). Mistress, I much mistrust that gypsy. She has related some weird tale, as I can see both by your face and manner. I'll have her under guard. (*crosses toward R. 1 E. At same time SANBORN with hand under folds of cloak crosses L. behind NAN towards fireplace.*)

NAN. (*quite collected, stopping CAPT. H. with gesture*). One moment, Captain Hawley.

CAPT. H. (*facing her*). Well?

NAN. Captain Hawley, I've given favors to yourself and brother officers. I've entertained you more than once. May I crave a favor in return.

CAPT. H. (*hesitating*). Mistress, 'twill be my pleasure to confer it; if pleasure does not conflict with duty.

NAN. (*deliberately*). You'll not arrest this woman!

CAPT. H. (*aside, annoyed*). Now this I do not like.

NAN. (*stepping forward quickly*). You doubt my loyalty?

CAPT. H. (*bowing*). That I cannot doubt, and yet—

NAN. You are suspicious of this woman?

CAPT. H. In truth, I am.

NAN. You saw my agitation. You think I am in plot against the King?

CAPT. H. Nay, mistress, I cannot think that.

NAN. (*vehemently*). You do—I see you do! Your doubts arise with the first suspicion. Well, well, such is the reward of years of loyalty. Well, Captain Hawley, the witch has brought

me news; bad news for me, though good for you and yours. You've heard the story of that man I knew, and—thought well of. The one who joined the rebels?

CAPT. H. (*aside*). I could have sworn it! (*aloud*). Mistress, I have heard some gossip of the sort.

NAN. (*deliberately*). That man, Captain Hawley, is— (*pause; SANBORN draws away from NAN, putting hand under robe for pistol*) dead. You entered as I heard the news. You understand my agitation now. (*slowly*). I cared for him in days gone by. (*stands at c. with down-bent head.*)

CAPT. H. You'll give your word that this was all the gypsy's news?

NAN. (*head still bent low, slowly*). Yes. (*stage grows darker.*)

CAPT. H. (*sincerely*). Mistress, I crave your pardon for suspicion so unworthy. Your sorrow does you credit. A man's a man, whate'er his uniform, and doubly gallant must he be whose death will draw a tear from Mistress Nan. I'll back to the feast with your excuse. (*goes up to L. 2 E., bows in doorway*) Mistress. (*thunder without as CAPT. H. exits L. 2 E.*) (*NAN goes quickly up to L. 2 E., looks off; and comes down L. C.*)

NAN. (*fiercely to SANBORN*). I lied for you!

SAN. (*pushing back hood and standing with one hand on mantel above his head*). I did not ask it.

NAN. (*with indecision*). You'll pass the sentries? Nay, George Sanborn, you shall not escape. I will alarm the guard.

SAN. (*examining priming of pistols at table L. C.*). There is no escape for me. Your British friends are all around the house. When they come in—I die.

NAN. (*looks at him with indecision, then paces stage at c. with hands locked behind her. Flickering lightning without casement*). There is a way—there is a way! (*suddenly*) Remember, George Sanborn; I do not save your life for love of you. Some ten years back you rescued me from out the river. To-night I'll save *your* life and wipe away that hateful debt. You understand!

SAN. (*springing up quickly*). You will do this? Good! But how to escape?

NAN. There is a way. Toby will know. We must have Toby's aid. (*goes up L. 2 E., concealing herself behind curtain and beckons off L. speaking softly*) Toby—Toby! (*aside*). He will not look this way! (*calling*). Toby! (*aside*). Alack, we are losing time. I dare not go in there—they would detain me. (*beckoning*). Toby—Toby! Out on the man—why won't he look! Toby! (*joyfully*) Ah—he sees! (*beckons energetically*). This way, this way! (*SANBORN replaces head covering.*)

(Enter TOBY, L. 2 E. NAN draws him away from doorway.)

NAN. Toby, I need you here. Are they well served? (*pointing L.*)

TOBY. As well as they can be, Mis' Nan. I recollect they only wants a sight ob you.

NAN. They must wait—they must wait. (*lightning without*). Here Toby—look here. (*draws him towards SANBORN at R. C.; NAN pushes back SANBORN's headcovering.*)

TOBY. Massa Sanborn! (*starts back in astonishment as crash of thunder rolls away without*). Massa Sanborn by all that's—

NAN. Hush, Toby! You understand—he is in danger here. We must get him past the sentries.

TOBY (*excitedly*). But, how Mis' Nan—but how? Dar be not many sentries, but enuf.

NAN. (*pointing off L. 1. E.*). How many are there?

TOBY. Two, Mis' Nan.

NAN. (*pointing R. 1. E.*) And there?

TOBY. Two, Mis' Nan.

NAN. (*pointing up c.*). And at the casement?

TOBY. One. Dar's no escape Mis' Nan; dar's no escape.

SAN. He is right.

NAN. (*with exclamation of impatience*). Alack, I have no patience with you men! Why this resignation? Do you want to die, George Sanborn? 'Tis weak, 'tis cowardly, to give up life and liberty without a fight. You are free as yet; are your arms enough? Here are my father's pistols. (*crosses L and takes pistols from cabinet. Burst of merriment and pounding on table L. 2 E.*)

SAN. I am well armed. (*NAN puts back pistols in cabinet thoughtfully. Room dark but for glow of burning logs at L. and light from banquet room L. 2 E. Lightning and long roll of thunder. To TOBY*). You say there is but one without the casement? (*points c.*)

TOBY (*trembling*). Yes, Massa Gawrge.

NAN. (*watching SANBORN intently*). Yes—yes—?

SAN. (*after deliberating*). 'Tis no use. One shot would draw the others in a moment. (*thunder*). My cause is lost, (*to NAN*) you love me not. Well, what remains, but death?

NAN. Fool! You shall not die, but another must!

TOBY. (*trembling at a vivid flash of lightning*). Who then, Mis' Nan?

NAN. (*standing at c., figure outlined by flash, pointing up c.*). That sentry. (*crash of thunder and light patter of rain without*).

SAN. But how to kill the man without a noise?

NAN. Your knife, man—your knife! Slip through the casement unseen by him. The rain begins; he may take shelter in a corner of the wall. Creep close upon the man, and then—*(pauses with significance.)*

SAN. *(with determination)*. I will try. *(pushes back folds of dress, leaving arms free to elbow. Draws knife and runs quickly to casement, NAN at L. and TOBY R., watching intently. SANBORN opens casement cautiously and springs up with knee on sill.)*

OSPREY *(sharply challenging from without)*. Who goes?

SAN. *(pushing casement shut and facing NAN)*. That chance is gone. What now?

NAN. Hush! Let me think—let me think—*(lightning flashes without as she paces room, pressing knuckles into cheeks)*. There is yet another way—there must be—where are your brains? Think—think. But one man stands between you and your liberty. A woman might dispose of him. *(suddenly)* I have it—a woman shall!

SAN. What now?

NAN. Come close. *(SAN on L. and TOBY R. of NAN at C.)* That sentry dies but die he must without a sound.

SAN. Yes—yes?

NAN. I'll call him to the casement. I'll find the pretext, and you—and you—must hover close behind. But be not seen, or else our plot is vain. When he comes up to speak, his neck will reach the level of the casement. Toby, your arms are strong; you'll seize him then. Squeeze with your might upon his throat, and you, George Sanborn, use your knife.

SAN. Good, it can be done!

TOBY. Mis' Nan, he'll neber need no knife if I onct ketch dat throat.

NAN. Come, we lose time. Bend low that he will not see. *(Vivid glare of lightning as NAN approaches casement cautiously. TOBY following L. and SANBORN with hand under cloak, R. Suddenly three sharp taps are heard at casement glass. Pause. Long roll of thunder. Taps repeated while thunder is echoing.)*

NAN. *(looking at SANBORN; then to TOBY, pointing at casement)*. Open! *(TOBY shivers with fear, hesitates; then goes up and cautiously draws back glass shutter. As window opens, a light bundle of twigs with note attached is thrown through casement, landing at feet of NAN and SAN. at C. Flash of lightning lights up tableau as they bend over it in surprise.)*

NAN. What is it? *(SANBORN seizes bundle, detaches paper and comes down to fireplace at L.)*

SAN. A note! *(kneels before blaze to read. NAN stands with one hand on SANBORN's shoulder; TOBY next to NAN at L. C.)*

OSPREY in *British regimentals passes without casement with gun on shoulder. Comes to halt with back to window*). What's this?

NAN. Read—read!

SAN. (*reads*). "Leap from the casement and gain the wood. The sentry is a friend who will not see. A mile to the north stands a little hut. There you will find a Continental uniform. 'Tis better to run the risk in it than in the gypsy guise. The country swarms with enemies."

(*Enter SIR ANTHONY, intoxicated, at L. 2 E. Stands unsteadily at c with hands in pockets, facing group at fireplace.*)

TOBY (*plucking NAN'S sleeve, and pointing to SIR A.*). Mis' Nannie.

SIR A. (*in thick voice*). Mishtriss Nan—why don't you come in and—and—Hellow, what the dev'ls thish?—I—Oh—say! (*TOBY has glided behind seizing SIR A. by throat. SANBORN draws knife but NAN catches his wrist.*)

NAN. Not the knife!—Put him there. (*points to closet, R. 2 E. beneath stairway. SIR A. struggles feebly. SAN and TOBY carry him off R. 2 E. Re-enter and lock door. SIR A. calls feebly; beats upon door.*) (*Pointing to casement*). Your ring is here, George Sanborn. The way is clear.—Begone!

SAN. You will not keep the ring?

NAN. (*angrily*). I? Keep a rebel's ring? *This is my answer!* (*tosses ring through casement*). I hate thee still! Begone before I may repent of thy escape! (*turns away*).

SAN. 'Tis well. (*pulls hood over head and leaps on casement, looking off right and left keenly. NAN faces him as vivid flash of lightning outlines SANBORN'S weird gypsy figure in casement frame. In terrific crash of thunder which follows, SANBORN leaps into darkness and disappears. Figure of OSPREY seen with back to window in flickering lightning. NAN runs to casement, gazing off right, as sheets of rain descend. Sound of merriment off L. 2 E., and feeble battering against door by SIR A. at R. 2 E. TOBY leans against door, looking at NAN with scared face.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*Same as in Act I: Curtains drawn before casement c. B.; lighted candles on tall mantel above fireplace; CAPT. H. smoking long-stemmed pipe thoughtfully before fire at L.; other pipes on mantel; SIR TOBY, SIR ANTHONY and LTS. JONES and FARADAY play at dice on table L. C.; pile of money on table; TOBY standing near L. 2 E.; OSPREY with gun on shoulder paces visible gallery above.*

SIR T. (*rattling dice box above head*). Double or quits?

SIR A. Take it. (*SIR T. throws; SIR A. follows suit.*)

LT. J. Sir Toby wins.

LT. F. Upon my life 'tis true, upon my life!

SIR T. Mine it is. (*draws money towards him.*) How now, Sir Anthony? Shall we throw again?

SIR A. Faith no—that is my last. (*points to money which SIR T. is pocketing.*) My pockets are ill made for guineas.

SIR T. Come, then, we will join the parson with a pipe. (*points to CAPT. H.*) (*SIR A. rises and takes pipe from mantel; lights it from taper which TOBY holds; sits facing fire. To LT. J.*) Do you stay in the game?

LT. J. Aye—I want revenge.

SIR T. Well then, good luck to both, if such a thing is possible. (*crosses L. taking pipe from mantel. Waves aside taper which TOBY offers and lights pipe from candle himself. Stands smoking with one hand against mantel above his head, facing CAPT. H. and SIR A. Lieutenants continue to dice at table.*) Well, Hawley, still thinking on our mystery?

CAPT. H. Still thinking, Phillip, and as far from a conclusion as when we found Sir Anthony asleep within the closet.

SIR T. Egad, I've got at one conclusion.

CAPT. H. And that?

SIR T. Is that Sir Anthony was drunk.

SIR A. (*lightly*). Faith, I was unconscious of it.

CAPT. H. Aye—that we will not gainsay.

SIR T. (*to SIR A.*). But, egad, man, do you remember nothing of what occurred within this hall?

SIR A. (*helplessly*). Nothing? Faith, I remember less than nothing. I saw Nell's pretty eyes, and 'neath their charm, was drinking heavily. Then came sleep, and next I know was when you shook me into stupid consciousness. You say you found me in the closet. Now, curse me, how did I get there?

SIR T. (*laughing*). You walked there in your sleep and locked the door.

CAPT. H. With key on the outside.

LT. J. You could not do that sober, Sir Anthony (*laughter*).

LT. F. Upon my life 'tis true—upon my life!

SIR A. The laugh is yours. I am as innocent of the whole as any babe unborn. Faith, I must take your word that all this happened.

SIR T. But man; you remember leaving us at the table? You came in here, and then, some minutes later, back came Mistress NAN saying she had left you with the fortune teller.

CAPT. H. Upon which we forgot of your existence for some hours.

SIR T. Until it occurred to me you must be making love to the old gypsy.

CAPT. H. Which was not impossible for Sir Anthony. (*laughter*).

LT. J. (*from table*). Faith, Hawley, that is good.

SIR T. So, fearing consequences, we made a search, but could find neither. Egad, I swore she had made off with you, and that up the chimney.

LT. J. When I heard a long drawn snore, and there we found you in the closet.

CAPT. H. And the gypsy—gone.

SIR T. Which is the part that puzzles. 'Twas not surprising to find you locked within a closet—or in a guard house either—but curse me if I see how the gypsy left the house with sentries all around it.

SIR A. (*who has regarded each in bewildered manner*). Gentlemen, I may be guilty of all this; but confound me if I am aware of it. Let's see: (*looks thoughtfully at burning logs*). Yes, I remember now, the gypsy was standing there. (*all look at SIR A. attentively, including LIEUTENANTS J. and F.*). But no—'twas not the gypsy. Confound my stupid head. Then she glared into my face, and something caught me by the throat.—Yes, by Jove, it caught me tight; my neck aches yet.—And then—and—then—No, I cannot think it out. No doubt I went to sleep.

SIR T. (*nodding head wisely*). 'Twas the gypsy who caught you by the throat.

SIR A. (*indignantly*). What! An old woman? Faith, I'm not a weakling in my cups. And she put me in that closet? (*pointing R. 2 E.*)

SIR T. It could be done. What think you, Hawley?

CAPT. H. She needed help. For me, I suspect the negroes. (*TOBY at L. 2 E. rubs hand thoughtfully over chin.*)

LT. J. (*rattling and throwing dice*). And so say I.

CAPT. H. Wilde throws the blame on Mistress Nan. (*to SIR A.*) Think, Baxter; was she within the hall when you came in?

SIR A. (*helplessly*). Faith, I cannot tell. There may have been a regiment for aught I know.

SIR T. (*laughing*). Egad, but Wilde was wild indeed. He would hear naught but that the woman was a spy, and accused Mistress Nan of letting her escape. Then, when our Mistress answered with her usual spirit, Wilde shut her up; bade her keep her room and placed a sentry there. (*points to OSPREY pacing gallery above.*)

CAPT. H. A pretty way to treat one's hostess.

LT. J. (*rattling dice*). Aye—I'll not suspect sweet Mistress Nan. We know her loyalty too well.

LT. F. (*throwing dice*). Upon my life 'tis true, upon my life.

SIR A. And how he made us ride this morning. Faith I believe the country round for fifty miles is on the hunt for gypsies.

SIR T. A pretty chase, for all. Wilde himself has scarce left saddle since day dawned. Mad enough he'll be to have missed the wines at Willington.

LT. J. (*laughing*). Aye, the matter is important that will take Wilde from his bottle. I wonder where he searches now.

SIR A. (*stretching languidly*). And all about a gypsy wench. Faith, I say let her go.

CAPT. H. (*severely*). Young man, your Colonel is a soldier. He allows no chance either for or against his cause to pass. If the gypsy is a spy, she must be caught.

SIR A. But wherefore should she be a spy? Sir Toby picked her up upon the road and brought her here against her will. And what learned she of much import? And to whom will the information take? There is no rebel army in Carolina; there's not a band of fifty within 200 miles. Wherefore spy when there is no gain to come by it?

CAPT. H. (*humorously*). I've known some people to spy for no better reason.

SIR A. But this one risked her life.

CAPT. H. She should be caught if only to explain how she

escaped. There was treachery here last night, and you were drunk and in the midst of it.

SIR T. Egad, Baxter, 'tis well the Lord protects all drunken men and fools; else would you have a knife stuck in your ribs.

L.T. J. And where is Gowan all this time?

CAPT. H. That is also strange; for Gowan should have been here twelve hours ago. It looks as though we would linger another night.

SIR A. Faith nothing suits me better. Mistress Nan's wines are plentiful and all a man can ask for. (*galloping of hoofs off R.*)

SIR T. Ah! There comes Wilde now.

CAPT. H. (*putting down pipe and rising and standing with back to fireplace*). Or Gowan. (*galloping louder*).

SIR A. (*still smoking and walking up c.*). We will soon find out. (*Lts. J. and F. stop dice playing. Galloping ceases R.*)

SIR T. (*crosses R.*). I'll wager 'tis Wilde. Yes, here is the man himself.

(*Enter COLONEL WILDE, his uniform splashed with mud from hard riding*). What news of the witch, Colonel?

WILDE. None. Is Gowan here? (*to CAPT. H.*)

CAPT. H. Not yet.

WILDE. Strange, infernal strange. What can delay the man? (*paces stage at c.*) Now, curse the witch and curse these roads of Carolina. (*endeavors to brush mud from uniform*) A pretty chase I've had; and that through mud enough to drown both man and horse. Sergeant! (*enter Sergeant R. 1 E. and salutes*) Place that table there. (*points for table to be placed at c.*) And Sergeant; remove your men from the hall above. (*Sergeant signs to OSPREY who descends stairway at R and exits R. 1 E. Soldiers enter R. 1 E. and place table at c. Sergeant remains R. 1 E. To TOBY*) You nigger, bring a bottle. Your best Madeira—quick. (*exit TOBY, L. 2 E., and re-enter later with bottle and glass which he places on table at c. and exits L. 2 E. WILDE sits at table c. fills glass and drinks*). What the devil can keep Gowan?

CAPT. H. Perhaps our friend is taken with a lady whom he bides to court?

WILDE (*drinking*). 'Tis like enough. Demme, the man cannot resist a petticoat. However, he should be here. Those prisoners must shortly be in Charleston.

SIR T. And the gypsy—do you give her up?

WILDE. Give her up? Not I! I've roused the country round for twenty miles. She is in hiding now. But once she shows her head, our friends will lose no time to run her down. In the meantime, I'll begin the search where we left off last night—in Willington. (*slaps table*).

CAPT. H. You still suspect our hostess?

WILDE (*drinking*). Curse me, I suspect them all. If she's not in the plot, her servants are. The gypsy had no wings to pass the sentries. No—I have an idea which may bring a clew. Sergeant! Bring that nigger Toby here.

(*Two soldiers appear with fixed bayonets* L. 1 E. *Four enter* R. 1 E.; *two remain* R. 1 E.; *two cross stage behind Sergeant exit* L. 2 E. *and re-enter with* TOBY. *Soldiers remain at doors with arms presented. Sergeant salutes and remains* c. *back.* WILDE *at table* c.; *Lts. Jones and Faraday on* R. *and* L. *near his chair.* SIR A. *and* SIR T., R.; CAPT. H. *at* L. *with back to fireplace*). (*Roughly to* TOBY). Nigger, stand there! (*points* L. c.). Be careful of your speech or be prepared to curse the day when you were born. Do you know that I'm a man to keep my word?

TOBY. Cunnell, I well knows dat.

WILDE (*fiercely*). Enough—you prate too much. Do you know what it is to be suspended by the thumbs and beaten? Do you know that in this cursed land where good men hang; that dogs of slaves are held as naught? Do you know that torture has not yet gone out? Well then, be careful of your tongue. What did you in this hall last night?

TOBY (*ruminatively*). Las' night? At what time Cunnell?

WILDE. When we were at the table.

TOBY (*rubbing his ear*). Jes so; jes so. Well, Cunnell, dar war a deal; fact sah, I scarcely knows jes whar to start.

WILDE (*sternly*). Start at the beginning, fool. What made you leave the room where we were banqueting?

TOBY (*slowly*). Jes so, jes so. (*suddenly*) 'Twar Mis' Nan, Cunnell.

WILDE (*triumphantly*). Demme, I thought as much.

TOBY. She beckoned me frum de doorway.

WILDE. Good! What did she say?

TOBY (*carefully*). She seemed quite anxious, sah. (*hesitates*).

WILDE. Go on, go on.

TOBY (*very slowly*). And arsk me, Cunnell—

WILDE (*leaning forward with impatience as TOBY hesitates once more*). Yes!

TOBY. Arsk me if de off'cers hab dere fill of wine. (WILDE *sits back with disgusted expression*.)

WILDE. To which you replied—

TOBY. To which I replied, "I don't tink so, Mis' Nan; I nebber saw an off'cer yet who had." (*laughter from officers*.)

WILDE (*impatiently*). What said she then?

TOBY. Den, Cunnell? Why den Mis' Nan looked ober at Mars Baxter, who was standin' there, and smiled.—

WILDE (*interrupting suddenly*). Hold! I think you lie. (*to SIR ANTHONY*) Were you not at the table when this fellow left the room?

SIR A. Faith, I might have been under it for all I remember.

WILDE. Blockhead! (*to SIR T.*) Sir Toby; you must remember?

SIR T. Egad, I was not attending at the moment.

WILDE (*to Lts.*) But you noticed, Lieutenants?

LT. J. Faith, between our cups and Mistress Peg we never gave Sir Anthony a thought.

LT. F. Upon my life, 'tis true, upon my life.

WILDE (*angrily to CAPT. H.*). Hawley, you must remember whether this nigger left the room before Sir Anthony?

CAPT. H. Not I.

WILDE (*madly*). Hawley, you were drunk. You all were drunk. Curse me, for such a pack of drunken fools.

CAPT. H. (*slily to WILDE*). But Colonel Wilde remembers—his head was clear? (*all look at WILDE expectantly.*)

WILDE. I would not ask if I remembered. (*all look at one another in exasperating manner; then at WILDE and shake their heads knowingly.*)

CAPT. H. (*murmuring*). Just so, just so.

WILDE (*angrily*). Well, do you think I have naught else to do than watch this black-skinned scoundrel?

CAPT. H. (*murmuring as all shake their heads knowingly once more*). Just so, just so.

WILDE (*to TOBY*). Demme, I must take your word, seeing that they—(*officers all crane their necks toward him at which he hesitates*)—that we were drunk. Sir Anthony was in the room with the gypsy and Mistress Nan. What was the gypsy doing?

TOBY (*ruminatively*). De gypsy, sah? I tink dat gypsy was tellin' Mars Baxter's fortune.

SIR A. (*eagerly*). Now confound me if I remember that. What did she say?

WILDE (*sternly to SIR ANTHONY*). Enough! Your drunkenness has got us in a pretty scrape. (*to TOBY*) What happened then?

TOBY. Den sah? Why den Mis' Nan sends me in de cellar for Madeira.

WILDE (*leaning forward intently*). Ah; you went into the cellar, did you?

TOBY (*looking at WILDE*). Yes, sah.

WILDE (*intently*). Exactly so! What did you in the cellar?

TOBY (*surprised*). In de cellar, sah? Why I opened the Madeira.

WILDE (*rising sternly*). Hold! You opened something else! There is a trap door in that cellar.

TOBY (*genuinely astonished*). No, sah.

WILDE (*fiercely*). I say there is! A trap door giving entrance to a tunnel. That tunnel leads beneath the garden, coming up beyond our line of sentries.

TOBY (*astounded*). Befo' Heben, sah; I nebber heard of it.

WILDE (*sternly*). You led the gypsy through that tunnel. Be careful, dog, how you deny it.

TOBY (*solemnly raising hand*). Cunnel, may de Lord take my breff if I eber saw dat tunnel.

WILDE. 'Tis not the Lord you must account to, but to me. (*aside to CAPT. H.*) You searched the cellar well?

CAPT. H. From end to end. We sounded every bit of wall and floor without success.

WILDE (*puzzled*). Curse it, I may be wrong! Yet, if that tunnel fails, what way is left for her escape? She could not fly from the roof, nor pass the sentries. Ha—Sergeant! (*Sergeant comes down R. c. and salutes*). Are all your men trustworthy?

SER. I think so, Colonel.

WILDE. Who was on guard without the casement? (*points c.*)

SER. Osprey.

WILDE. Osprey? I do not know the name.

SER. He enlisted two days ago.

WILDE. The devil! Is it so?

SER. The man is a violent Tory, Colonel.

WILDE. You mean, he seems to be?

SER. No, it is more than that. He hates the rebels even more than us. It was with much ado I could prevent him abusing the prisoners on the march.

WILDE. What did he do? (*WILDE drinks and this disturbs his attention.*)

SER. He was for beating those who were too weak to walk.

WILDE. Is't so? He should enlist with my friend Gowan. If the man's a Tory, I well believe his hatred. (*signs Sergeant to retire. Sergeant salutes and goes up c.*) Egad, gentlemen, only to-day I came upon the body of a rebel lying across the entrance to a house. "Who shot the man," I asked, at which the owner boldly said, the fellow was a rebel and deserved no more. When asked if he attacked the house, the Tory said that such was not the case. The man had asked for bread, and demme if the householder didn't put a bullet into him; and seemed quite proud, forsooth, of having sent a rebel out the world. There's no love lost between these fellow-countrymen.

Sergeant, remove that fellow (*pointing to TOBY*) and tell the ladies I would see them. (*exit TOBY off L. 2 E.*)

CAPT. H. (*to WILDE*). Methinks an officer had best attend the ladies with your message.

WILDE (*laughing at CAPT. H.*). Now, demme, this fellow is a formal one. Sir Toby, tell the ladies I would have them attend me here. (*SIR T. ascends stairs at R.*) Not Mistress Nan—I will examine her alone. (*SIR T. crosses gallery and exits L.*)

CAPT. H. Faith, Wilde, you don't suspect the girls? They were with us at the table.

WILDE (*sharply*). I know my business, Hawley. When I ask for advice, you may give it. Ah, they are here.

(*Enter SIR T. L. of gallery, crosses to head of staircase, and bows, allowing DOROTHY, PEG and NELL, to precede him. Girls dressed in bright, quaint costumes; skirts short to show trim foot and ankle.*)

DOR. (*in gallery; aside to NELL and PEG*). I vow I saw him, girls.

NELL. Shucks, Dot! You used to dream about the man, but now you see your Osprey in your waking hours.

DOR. Indeed, 'tis so. He walked beneath my window all last night. But what was odd, he wore a British uniform; and when I oped the lattice and called to him, he said "Who goes?" in such an awful voice that I quickly closed the shutters in affright.

NELL (*as they reach head of stairs at R.*). Alack, you must have dreamed it. (*DOR. shakes her head rebelliously.*)

PEG. (*timidly to DOR. and NELL at head of stairs*). La! Look at all those bayonets, girls! Are you afraid?

NELL. Not I.

DOR. I would Nan were here!

PEG. We will keep close and make as bold a front as possible. (*they come down stairway with arms about each others' waists. Officers gaze at them with admiration. Girls stand at R. c. They glance timidly at COLONEL WILDE, who looks upon them impressively.*)

NELL. (*archly*). You think us rebels, Colonel Wilde?

WILDE (*gallantly*). If to be fair is false, I'll swear you all are false.

PEG. (*aside to Dor*). Now, that was pretty, Dot; I half expected something worse.

DOR. Hush, Peg. All men can flatter. He has a purpose behind that speech.

PEG. Save us, what can it be?

DOR. Listen (*all look at Wilde*).

WILDE. Young ladies, you are detained but for a moment. I dare say you are well acquainted with this house?

PEG. La, sir—we *ought* to be. We've lived in it since our birth, and that was eighteen—

NELL. (*interrupting*). Hush, Peg, you must *not* tell our age.

PEG. (*with hand to lips in comic dismay*). Oh, La—how stupid!

WILDE (*smiling*). A charming age, indeed.

PEG. (*aside to others*). Dot, you were *right*. There was a purpose in his speech.

WILDE (*with feigned carelessness*). I dare say that years ago you romped merrily through the passage 'neath the garden?

NELL. (*with puzzled expression*). Beneath the garden?

PEG. La—I never heard of it.

WILDE (*to Dor*). And you, Mistress Dorothy?

DOR. (*coldly*). I never knew of it. Perhaps my sister can give the information you desire.

WILDE (*knowingly*). Aye—perhaps she can.

CAPT. H. (*aside to Wilde*). Beyond a doubt there is no such passage, else they would know of it.

SIR A. (*mischievously*). Colonel, I have a charge against Mistress Nell. Last night she left the supper room just before the gypsy disappeared. Faith, 'tis the last thing I remember.

WILDE (*sharply*). How's this?

NELL. Nay, Colonel, I left with Sir Toby Fillip and was not near this room.

SIR T. (*laughing on stairs*). Aye—I'll vouch that Mistress Nell was in no plotting here.

WILDE (*to Nell*). What did you with Sir Toby?

NELL. (*blushing and confused*). No; I will not tell.

WILDE (*with assumed severity*). Sir Toby, what did you with Mistress Nell?

NELL. (*turning quickly on SIR T.*) Nay, do not tell, if you *ever* wish to see my face again.

WILDE. This investigation must go on. Where did you go, Sir Toby?

SIR T. (*laughing*). Egad, to an alcove in the West Hall, my Colonel; a curtained alcove, just large enough to hold a pair of lovers with a little squeezing. A famous place for secrets and soft speeches.

WILDE (*with assumed severity*). This looks like plotting. Mistress, your actions are suspicious.

NELL. (*confused*). Nay, Colonel; do not say that. Sir Toby will vouch that I am innocent.

SIR T. (*laughing on stairs*). Aye—as innocent as a pretty

girl can be—I kissed her but twice within a minute's time. (NELL covers face with hands and dashes up stairs. Officers laugh heartily. DOR. and PEG. astonished, ascend stairs primly).

NELL. (looking over banister of gallery). Alack, you all are horrid. There! (runs off L).

PEG. (over banister). And so say I. I'd like to see a man kiss me! (with assumed severity).

SIR A. (kissing hand to her). I accept your challenge, Mistress Peg.

DOR. (primly drawing PEG back). Come Peg, we will let Nan know of Nell's misconduct.

PEG. (aside, scolding as she crosses gallery). The wretches; why do they all kiss Nell. As though she were the only one in Willington who should be kissed. 'Tis scarcely fair, I say. (exits scolding, L., with DOR.).

WILDE (to SIR A.). Sir Anthony, bid Mistress Nan attend me here. (exit SIR A. up stairs at R. crosses gallery and exits L).

CAPT. H. (shaking finger at SIR TOBY). Still at your boyish tricks, Sir Toby?

SIR T. Boyish? Egad, man; at what age does mankind leave off kissing? Methinks not until death has frozen the warmth upon the lips.

WILDE (laughing). Demme, for kissing I would select our Mistress Nan. She is a beauty among ten thousand.

SIR T. Aye—and one I would not try to kiss.

WILDE. Why so?

SIR T. Methinks her conquest would be difficult.

WILDE. Such things are not impossible. (enter SIR ANTHONY in gallery above. Descends stairway at R). Well, what of Mistress Nan?

SIR A. Faith, her mood was none too pleasant.

WILDE. How so? Does she refuse to come before us?

SIR A. Most absolutely. She says she will take orders neither from Colonel Wilde nor any other man.

CAPT. H. (to Wilde). Methinks a request would be to more effect.

WILDE (aside). Curse the woman! (aloud). Very well; give Mistress Nan my compliments and ask if she will attend me here. (SIR A. salutes, ascends stairs and exits L. Irritably). I like not her airs and haughtiness. This stately wench must have a lesson. I would Gowan were here to deal with her.

SIR T. Faith, you are not afraid of her?

WILDE (drinks at table). Afraid? I? Arley Wilde, who has, methinks, some reputation as a devil? Not I! No woman

have I seen whose glance could hold me from my purpose. Yet this Mistress Nan has that within her eye—

CAPT. H. (*interrupting*). Which holds your actions prisoner?

WILDE (*recklessly*). No—by the gods, it is not so! You will see how I deal with her. (NAN *enters gallery, and crosses R*).

SIR T. She is coming now.

WILDE. Good. (*sits at table c. Pours wine and drinks while NAN descends stairs. Other officers bow*).

NAN. (*curtsying haughtily*). My thanks to Colonel Arley Wilde. He well repays my hospitality by keeping his hostess prisoner in her room!

WILDE. (*sitting at table*). Who was the gypsy who came here last night?

NAN. (*scornfully*). Alack, now that is fine! Do you think I know the name of every wench you gentlemen pick up upon the roads? Sir Toby brought her in. Ask him that question.

WILDE. She spoke with you while we were at the banquet. What did she say?

NAN. (*defiantly*). And if I refuse to answer?

WILDE (*rising impressively*). Then—

NAN. (*throwing back head haughtily*). What then?

WILDE. Then we know your loyalty is all assumed. Mistress Nan is no longer for the King when she consorts with the King's enemies.

NAN. (*vehemently*). Not so! I'm for the King, and all of you must know it well! My father knew King George and nursed in me from infancy allegiance to the crown. I've made some sacrifices for the cause. I've paid my rents when rents no more could be collected; I've turned the rebels from the door. I've entertained a hundred British officers. My wines have been for them; my house and lands at their disposal. And what is my reward? A gypsy's brought into my house, and because she disappears, suspicion in a moment turns on me. Because the King's officers hold drunken revel round my table,—'tis I on whom the blame must fall when one escapes whom they should be guarding. 'Tis I who must be guarded in my room and put to shame before my people. I thank you, gentlemen; (*curtsying proudly*) 'tis noble, manly, and worthy of your uniforms to hold a woman to account for your misdoing. (WILDE *makes move to speak*). (NAN *extends hand*). Nay—do not interrupt; for whose misdoing was it, if not yours? Had your guards been stationed as they should, the gypsy would have still been here. But no! you realize your negligence, and lest the blame should fall upon yourselves, you nobly cast the guilt upon your hostess. (*ironically*). My

thanks, gentlemen; my thanks for this reward of my good hospitality.

WILDE (*aside to CAPT. H.*). Demme, the woman is a queen. Her anger becomes her well.

CAPT. H. Let not her beauty turn your head. She has a charge to answer.

WILDE. I'll remember that without your telling. (*to NAN*). Mistress, your speech is well, and has the ring of truth. 'Tis possible injustice has been done, in which case I shall be the first to crave your pardon. However, there is a charge you must explain. The gypsy wished to speak with you alone. What did she say? (*NAN silent, with eyes fixed as though in thought*). WILDE, *aside to her*) Nay, do not fear, I could not judge you harshly though your own sweet lips pronounced your guilt. (*aloud*). What did the gypsy say?

NAN. (*with slight hesitation*). She brought me news.

WILDE. Of whom?

NAN. (*looking at CAPT. H.*) Of one I knew some years ago.

WILDE (*leaning forward*). Her news was?

NAN. (*mechanically, still looking at CAPT. H.*). That he was ill; that he was dying.

WILDE (*suddenly*). I have it, now! It was of him—the rebel—was it not? The man you jilted when he took up arms against the King?

NAN. (*slowly*). Yes—George Sanborn.

WILDE. And that was all?

NAN (*suddenly*). No!

WILDE. What more?

NAN. (*aside*). I have it now—I have it! (*aloud*). She told me this man was hunted down. His forces scattered; his body racked with pain; he lay not far away and in great danger of capture by your men. Dying, she said he was, and as a last request, he asked that I would see him. Gentlemen, you accuse me of consorting with the rebels; I proved that lie to her. This man I had known well. His last request was that I come unto his bedside. It was a dying wish, and one that friends cannot refuse. What did I answer her? I said: "George Sanborn chose a rebel's cause; he must accept a rebel's fate." With that I left her, going to my room just as Sir Anthony came in. When next I passed through here, neither Sir Anthony nor the gypsy was in sight. I joined you at the table and knew no more of them.

WILDE (*aside to CAPT. H.*). What say you, Hawley?

CAPT. H. I must confess that I am puzzled.

WILDE (*beckoning to SIR T. who crosses L and joins them*). Sir Toby; what think you of it?

SIR T. Egad, her speech rings true enough.

WILDE. And you believe it?

SIR T. Nay—I'll not say that. I believe no woman.

(Enter SERGEANT R I E. *Salutes*).

WILDE. Well, sergeant?

SER. A ring is found which may throw light upon the gypsy. A sentry picked it up without the casement.

NAN. (*aside, with finger to lips*). A ring!

WILDE (*quickly*). Let's have it! (SERGEANT *hands ring to WILDE who examines it at c*). A broad band of silver without a stone. Ha? What's this? A name. (*examines inside of ring attentively*. NAN *stands very quiet*). Lights there—the thing is most infernal small. (SIR T. *takes candle from mantel at L. to WILDE at c*). I have it now—George Sanborn! (All look at NAN—*pause*:)

NAN. (*slowly*). Well, I know naught of it.

WILDE. Methinks you do, good mistress. Methinks you know much more than those sweet lips will tell. (*suddenly*). Demme, I have it now. The gypsy was a man: the man was named George Sanborn. (NAN *stands very quiet. Triumphantly*). What say you to that, good Mistress Willington?

NAN (*with forced calmness*). I know naught of your theories. The ring may have lain there a year or more.

WILDE. Not so. There's not a speck of rust upon it.

SIR T. (*mockingly*). Egad, our hostess plays a different role!

SIR A. And loyal Mistress Nan is loyal to the King no more. (*laughs*).

WILDE (*aside*). Demme. I'll turn this incident to good account. (*aloud, sternly*). Enough, gentlemen; we will hear what our hostess has to say.

NAN. (*to WILDE*). You think me, then, a traitor?

WILDE. Demme, I have naught else to think.

NAN. (*with slow vehemence*). I am no traitor.

WILDE. Would that your actions did belie your words.

NAN. (*with emphasis*). I am no traitor!

WILDE. Did you receive the rebel in this hall?

NAN. I am NO traitor! I'm for the King. The man was here;—yes, I admit it. I would he were here now that I might prove my loyalty.

WILDE. This lover of yours—was—*here*?

NAN. (*vehemently*). No—no—a hundred times I will deny I love George Sanborn. This man I have known well in years gone by. Think you a woman has no feeling? I could not see him hang, though hanging he deserved. (*haughtily*). Yes,

I admit George Sanborn was the spy in gypsy guise. 'Twas I who helped him to escape; but still I am no traitor. (*exclamations from officers. Fiercely*). I'm for the King—dost hear? My life all goes to prove my loyalty. The rebel cause—the rebel men, I hate; the rebel flag I'd trample in the mire. A debt of life I owed this man, for he saved mine from out the river. That debt now paid, I am at liberty to hate. 'Once more I say, I would this man were here that I might prove my loyalty.

CAPT. H. Mistress, a torrent of words will not cancel the deed.

WILDE (*aside; looking at NAN*). Gods, but the wench is beautiful. Now, Arley Wilde, is your good opportunity. Defend her and she'll not prove ungrateful.

SIR T. (*insolently, to NAN*). You do but prove my theory. All women are hypocrites and liars. They caress when just about to stab.

WILDE (*interposing*). Away, Fillip! (*to NAN*). Mistress, I'll swear you had good cause. Such loyalty as yours succumbs not to slight provocation. Demme, were I a rebel, I'd penetrate a thousand foes to get one glance from those sweet eyes.

CAPT. H. (*aside*). What mood is this? 'Tis strange for Wilde.

NAN. (*eagerly, to WILDE*). You believe I am still loyal to the King?

WILDE (*looking intently at her*). There are none more staunch in Carolina. (*leaning toward her, aside*). Nor yet more beautiful.

NAN. (*joyfully*). You still believe in me? (*to others*). And you, gentlemen? Must one mistake of mine destroy the trust of years' acquaintance? (*others look doubtful and turn away*). Nay, turn not from me. I would give all I had to undo the act which now must blot my loyalty.

WILDE. Let no man say he doubts our hostess. To do so means to cross his sword with mine.

NAN. (*curtsying low*). Good Colonel, I'm all unworthy of that speech.

WILDE (*coming close to her*). Not so—not so!. You are worthy of a kingdom, could a man but give it thee.

NAN. (*sincerely*). Alack—I would I were a Queen to reward those friends who trust me now.

WILDE (*with face close to hers*). Perhaps you can reward them—(*NAN turns away*). Come, gentlemen, I will conduct the investigation with Mistress Nan, alone. Sergeant, retire with your men. (*exit officers L 2 E*. SIR T. and SIR A. *arm in*

arm, conversing. Lieutenants following. CAPT. H. going last with down-bent head. SERGEANT signs to soldiers who exit at respective doors, leaving NAN and WILDE alone. WILDE drinks at table.)

NAN. I scarce could hope for such forbearance. You believe that I am for the King? (WILDE looks fondly at her.) I am unworthy of that faith. What can I do? What reparation make for the grievous wrong I did last night? It was an impulse—but no, I will be honest—it was *no* impulse. I could not see George Sanborn die. Ah, Colonel; some say that I am strong of heart. I'll not believe that hence. A woman's heart is weak for those she loves; and woman's heart will rule her actions, though empires fall to serve her will. Alack, I fear my loyal reputation's gone.

WILDE (*studying her face*). I wonder if Mistress Nan would do as much for me?

NAN. Do what for thee?

WILDE. Risk loyalty to save my life? The same you risked to save the rebel?

NAN. Who knows? Generosity will quickest touch a woman's heart. And if that rule applies, my heart is now much touched by your forbearance.

WILDE (*regarding her amorously*). Demme, but you are beautiful!

NAN. (*curtsying*.) I scarce could hope for forgiveness in the form of flattery.

WILDE (*leaning toward her*). 'Forgiveness comes' readily enough to one who has such eyes as yours. Wilt drink a health to those sweet eyes? (*crosses to table c and pours wine in glass*.)

NAN. (*smiling*.) What woman could refuse a toast so flattering. (*tastes wine from glass which WILDE offers*.)

WILDE (*turning glass*). Let my lips touch where those sweet lips have kissed. (*drinks*.)

NAN. Fie, Colonel—you flatter handsomely.

WILDE. Nay—'tis not flattery to render homage to such peerless beauty. Another health to those sweet lips. (*fills glass*.)

NAN. (*turning away*.) No more;—no more, for gracious' sake.

WILDE (*close behind her*). Our speech is all too weak for describing beauty such as yours.

NAN. (*laughing*.) Alack—don't go beyond our speech, for I shall never understand. But come, my fault was serious last night. Atonement must be made. What shall it be?

WILDE (*drinking at table*). Aye—you must be punished.

NAN. (*gaily.*) Surely? What shall it be, my Colonel? Bread and water in my room throughout the week?

WILDE. Nay—that would rob us of your presence and be a punishment to us who do deserve none.

NAN. (*curtsying.*) Thanks, Colonel Wilde. You have a pretty speech to-day.

WILDE. I am inspired by your eyes.

NAN. My thanks again; but what shall be the penance? Remember, Colonel, it must be severe.

WILDE. You called me differently a moment since?

NAN. I called you differently than Colonel Wilde? Nay, I remember not.

WILDE. You said, "my Colonel." I would I could claim that relationship.

NAN. (*stepping back.*) Your pardon, I spoke with thoughtless freedom.

WILDE. (*smiling.*) Nay—I am not hurt by it.

NAN. But I might be. You men take much unto yourselves.

WILDE. (*amorously.*) Would I could take you unto myself!

NAN. (*indignantly.*) Colonel!

WILDE. Nay—take no offense. If I am bold, 'tis love of you that makes me so.

NAN. (*merrily.*) Alack, how readily you soldiers fall in love. I'll not believe a word of it.

WILDE. If on my knees I should declare it?

NAN. Nay, not even then. A man drops readily upon his knees to any woman. A silly habit, I call it, and unmanly.

WILDE. (*with winning insolence.*) You are too practical for love. But never fear; I'll wean you to it.

NAN. (*haughtily.*) Now, Colonel, your speech has grown offensive.

WILDE. No—no—'tis part of your atonement! You asked me to name your punishment: I will, and readily. The sentence is a *kiss* which you must give to me, who now adores you.

NAN. This is an insult. I thought I addressed a gentleman.

WILDE. Nay—men cannot be lovers and gentlemen at once. Nature's extremes can never meet, and every man has two within him. Come, Mistress—the kiss I want and I must have, though it take force to get it.

NAN. (*turning away scornfully.*) Your breath is as offensive as your manner.

WILDE. Say you so? I shall take two for that! (*seizes NAN about shoulders. She struggles.*)

NAN. (*panting.*) Colonel!

WILDE. Nay, the medicine is not so bad, but what most women *like* to take it. (*in struggle they get behind table at c.*)

NAN. Stop, or—

WILDE. I never stop without my purpose gained!

NAN. Cur! Take that! (*NAN's hand coming in contact with a glass of wine on table, she dashes it in WILDE's face, at same moment releasing herself from his embrace. WILDE leans stupidly against table with wine dripping from face. NAN calls off L 2 E.*)
Gentlemen!

(*Enter officers L 2 E.*)

NAN. (*scornfully.*) Look to your gallant Colonel. I fear he is in wine, when he insults a lady in her house.

CAPT. H. (*half-aside.*) Faith it looks as though he *was* in wine. A shower must have struck him.

LT. F. Upon my life, 'tis true—upon my life!

WILDE (*hoarsely; wiping wine from face.*) Mistress—gentlemen—demme the lady and I had words, and some good wine was spilled with temper. I've been in haste, perhaps. Well, I ask your pardon, Mistress Willington. (*NAN at R. c. looks at him haughtily without inclining her head. WILDE walks up to L. 2 E. with slight stagger, calling off.*) Ho! there, you niggers—bring in the wine!

NAN. Colonel Wilde forgets himself when giving orders in my house. I'll have no drinking in this hall. My father died here.

WILDE (*boisterously.*) Now, by the devil! What airs these provincials give themselves! What care I for your father, Mistress—

CAPT. H. (*aside to WILDE.*) Careful, Wilde!

WILDE. Away, Hawley—I'll have my say and let this beauty know her place. (*to NAN.*) This country, Mistress, is ours, by soldiers' right. Hey—do you think we came here to be quartered when and how you please? Not so. We are King George's troops, and palaces—yes, demme, palaces,—are none too good for such. (*lowering voice and approaching NAN.*) 'Tis lucky we want naught else beside your house and servants.

CAPT. H. (*indignantly.*) Colonel Wilde!

WILDE (*facing him fiercely.*) Who commands here, Captain Hawley? (*crosses to L. 2 E.*) Nigger! (*Enter TOBY L. 2 E.*) Bring in the wine! Plenty of it and be quick about it. (*glances defiantly at NAN.*)

NAN. (*to TOBY, quietly but firmly.*) Toby, you will obey my orders. You'll bring no wine into this hall to-night. *exit.*

TOBY (*standing in doorway, trembling.*) Yes, Mis' Nan—

WILDE (*pounding on table.*) Did you hear, scoundrel? The wine! (TOBY *remains motionless with eyes fixed on NAN.*) Now, by the Gods, do you refuse? Dog—I'll have you flayed alive!

TOBY (*trembling violently.*) I'se Mis' Nannie's dog, Cunnell Wilde.

WILDE. Sergeant!

(*Enter SERGEANT R. 1 E. and salutes.*) Four men and a whip. (*exit SER.*) We will see who rules here, Mistress Willington! (*galloping of hoofs off right.*)

NAN. You coward! (*enter soldiery who seize TOBY. Galloping louder off right.*)

WILDE. Sergeant—who comes without? (*challenge of sentries off R. SERGEANT exits and re-enters.*)

SERGEANT. A prisoner, just captured!

WILDE. A prisoner? Put him in the stable with the others.

SER. One carrying dispatches, Colonel. He managed to destroy them before our men could bind him.

WILDE. Destroyed them, did he? Bring him in! (*to soldiers guarding TOBY.*) Keep that fellow under guard. (*exit soldiers L. 2 E. with TOBY. WILDE half sitting on table, L. C. NAN R. C.*)

(*Enter SANBORN, guarded by soldiers, R. 1 E. SANBORN in regimentals of Carolina militia; arms bound behind him.*) Prisoner, who are you!

NAN. (*whispering aside to SAN.*) Nay, do not tell your name. (*SANBORN keeps eyes fixed on NAN.*)

WILDE (*to SANBORN.*) Your name, I say!

SAN. That I choose to withhold. My rank is Colonel in the militia of Carolina.

WILDE (*laughing boisterously.*) Carolina militia? Demme, there is no Carolina militia. They disbanded on the run from Camden. (*laugh from officers.*) What dispatches were you carrying? (*SANBORN laughs in his face and turns looking at NAN.*) What dispatches, you dog?

SAN. (*looks fiercely at WILDE.*) Yours is a foolish question to ask a soldier. (*aside.*) 'Tis well I destroyed them. They do not dream of Marion's existence.

WILDE (*leaves table and approaches SANBORN threateningly.*) The means could be found to make you tell. (*SAN. ignores WILDE, still looking at NAN.*) Why do you look at Mistress Nan?

SAN. (*harshly.*) I happen to know the lady who entertains her country's enemies.

WILDE. A dem fine entertainer! She refused to give us wine a moment since.

SAN. You seem to have *your* share, Colonel.

WILDE (*sharply*.) Enough! Why do you withhold your name?

SAN. I have my reasons. I am your prisoner of war.

WILDE. Perhaps!

(*Enter DOROTHY coming down stairway hastily.*)

DOR. Nan—Nan—I wish to speak with you.—Quick, dear—(*sees SAN. and hesitates on stair.*) Alack! George Sanborn!

WILDE (*quickly*.) Is't so? Sanborn? Demme it is the spy himself! Your reasons were the best for holding back that name. Curse me, I've had a hunt for you this day. (*ironically.*) My thanks for coming in so opportune? You know our little ceremony for a spy?

SAN. I am a prisoner of war.

WILDE. War? There is no war in Carolina. It ended on the field of Camden. Demme, I shall follow Gowan's plan and stand not on formality. You are a rebel, traitor, and a spy. Each is a death warrant in such times as these. (*to SER.*) Sergeant, you'll guard him well in that large room beyond the corridor. (*points L. 1 E.*) Two sentries place outside each window, and two to keep the door. (*to SANBORN*) You hang at sunrise!

NAN. (*with hand to heart, aside.*) My God!

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*Same as in Acts I and II. Stage dark but for burning logs in fireplace L. Occasional rattle of arms without. Low, quick music.*

(NAN steals along gallery from L., descends stair and cautiously crosses L. 2 E. Pushes back curtains; lights off L. 2 E.)

NAN. (looking off L. 2 E.) Still at their dice and punch. Well, well; I'll make no noise upon this errand. (*closes curtains L. 2 E. and comes down L. 1 E.*) I cannot see thee die, George Sanborn. Friendship, Gratitude or Love; whate'er it be; my heart enslaves my will and bids me aid this man to freedom.

(*Unlocks and takes drawer of money from cabinet at L. 1 E. Sits on low stool before fireplace counting money.*) My father's guineas. Alack, I never thought to buy a traitor's life with these. Ah, why did he turn traitor? (*sighs.*) Let's see. Will the guards take five, or ten or twenty guineas? Fifty, if must be, for George Sanborn shall go free. What's that? (*slight noise off L. 1 E. NAN listens; then quickly draws back and conceals herself behind curtains at C.*)

(*Enter SANBORN and OSPREY at L. 1 E.*)

SAN. Who is my deliverer? Your face, man—let me see your face! (*draws OSPREY into firelight.*) OSPREY!

OSP. Sh! Two sentries stand at yonder door. (*points off R. 1 E.*) Our lives are in peril at this moment.

SAN. But whence that uniform?

OSP. Shucks, man. You are inquisitive for one whose life hangs on a hair. After Camden, I became a Tory, that is,—you understand;—I went to them and was enrolled as such. A spy if you will,—as Wilde calls you.

SAN. I see it now. You were the man who stood last night outside the casement. It was you who allowed me to escape. You risk much, Osprey.

OSP. Shucks—there is but one death, and that comes in its own good time. (*points C.*) Perhaps those prisoners will not see Charleston if I stay in the British ranks.

SAN. Noble Osprey! But why this risk for me?

OSP. I could not leave George Sanborn to die. Come, we lose time. (*crosses toward R. 1 E.*)

SAN. One question more; how did you overcome your fellow sentry?

OSP. Faith, with a bottle and a gag.—The first will conquer man as readily as woman.

SAN. We'll kill the men betwixt the door and wood.

OSP. Aye. Perhaps a shot or two will stampede the guard about the stable doors.

SAN. Wait for me within the doorway. I will follow.

OSP. Then do so quickly. Our lives depend on't.

(Exit R. 1 E. SANBORN leans against banister R. NAN. leaves curtains and comes down behind him. He turns and suddenly sees her.)

MUSIC SLOWER.

NAN. (pointing off R. 1 E.) Go!

SAN. (falling on one knee and clasping her waist.) Nan!

NAN. (starting back.) Do not touch me! I hate you as I hate all rebels.

SAN. (standing before her with folded arms.) If you hate me, then here is your revenge. Call in your friends, the—British.

NAN. I would not have your life, George Sanborn. Go—quickly!

SAN. Thank God, you do not hate! (impetuously.) Say you love me, Nan, and I will go this instant.

NAN. Were the rope around your neck, I would not say that. (slight noise at R. 3 E.) Hist! Some one comes. (looks off R.)

SAN. I will bide here and take my chance with him.

NAN. No—no! Make your escape while the time affords. Listen! (tramp of soldiery off R. 1 E. Low voices without. NAN and SAN. stand close together at R. C. looking R.)

SAN. The sentries are being changed. There's no escaping now until the patrol has passed. I will bide here within the shadow. (kneels on stairs R. behind balustrade.)

(Enter DOROTHY at R. 3 E. DOR. starts back in surprise and fear on seeing NAN.)

NAN. (sharply.) Dot! How now? What does this mean?

DOR. (embarrassed.) No—Nan; I cannot answer.

NAN. (taking her by shoulders and looking into her face.) You cannot answer? Now, I say you must! I'll not have my sister roaming at dead of night through Willington, and that when the house is full of soldiery. (DOR. hangs head, NAN shakes her.) The meaning—Dot; what is the meaning of it?

DOR. (evasively.) I might ask the same of sister Nan.

NAN. You little fool; 'tis different with me. (fiercely.)

What is it, Dot? An appointment with an officer? Which one? I'll kill the dog with my own hand!

DOR. (*indignantly.*) Nan!

NAN. Hush! Not so loud! (*kissing her joyfully.*) There, little sister, I knew it was not that. But tell me what brings you here?

DOR. (*hesitating.*) I am afraid. You hate them so.

NAN. Nay—be not afraid, but tell me all.

DOR. Well, then; old Peter just came in. His horse all covered with blood and foam, he left beyond their line of sentries. Marion is coming, Nan! Marion, with thirty men to rescue those poor prisoners. You will not tell the British; for my sake—for George Sanborn's sake? His life depends on Marion's coming. Defeat is sure if they are warned, for Marion has but thirty, and Wilde full ninety men.

NAN. (*anxiously.*) Marion's band! I thought they were all scattered? They will surprise,—*defeat* King George's troops. Let me think, Dot; let me think.

DOR. Remember George Sanborn, Nan! (*tramp of soldiers and rattle of arms off R.*) What is that? (*crosses L. fearfully.*)

NAN. (*absently.*) 'Tis nothing. (*after a pause.*) No, I cannot let this come to pass. My loyalty is blackened as it is. Dot, I'll warn Colonel Wilde of Marion's coming.

DOR. (*vehemently.*) No—no! You must—you shall not! The secret is not yours.

NAN. (*smiling.*) The secret is for him who may discover it. Nay, Dot, the British have lost faith in me. Think what an opportunity is this to regain my loyal reputation. Yes—yes—I'll warn them, and a warm reception we'll prepare for Francis Marion.

SAN. (*who had left stairway and crosses c., now touches NAN's arm.*) Listen!

DOR. (*startled.*) George Sanborn! Free?

SAN. (*to NAN.*) Nan—you will not do this! Think well! Marion, with his thirty are all that remain of freedom's power in our colony. For my sake, you'll not destroy this last poor hope of Carolina?

NAN. (*looking at him coldly.*) For your sake, George Sanborn? What have I not sacrificed for you? Your liberty and life I purchased at a price no other man could wring from me. Go, and enjoy both! As for your cause, it has no sympathy of mine: it must expect no mercy.

SAN. You will warn the British of Marion's coming?

NAN. (*defiantly.*) Aye—George Sanborn!

SAN. Then, I'll remain here and die.

NAN. (*scornfully.*) Do you think that will deter me? Do you think that I'll stand by and let our troops be butchered unawares. Do you think that I'll not improve this chance to redeem my loyalty. Aye—I'll warn our men though twenty Sanborns die!

(*Galloping of hoofs and challenge of sentries off R. Rattle of arms without. MUSIC QUICKER.*) Ah—what is that? (*Enter OSPREY R. 1 E. NAN R. C., SAN. C., and DOR. L. C.*)

OSP. Too late. Sanborn, we die together now! (*confusion in the house.*)

DOR. (*throwing arms about OSPREY's neck.*) My Armand!!

NAN. Die? No—no! Then, yes—but die like men! Here are my father's pistols. (*crosses towards cabinet followed by SAN, when soldier steps from L. 1 E. presenting a bayonet at her breast. NAN turns, throwing arms about SANBORN's neck.*) George! I have killed you!

SAN. (*clasping her.*) No—no; you give me life! I can die now and happily, for Nan still loves me!

OSP. (*endeavoring to release himself from DOROTHY's embrace.*) Come, I need my hands to meet these dogs.

(*Enter officers and negroes with lights. Soldiers with bayonets presented stand in each doorway. NAN. tears herself from SANBORN's embrace and rushes to WILDE.*) MUSIC STOPS.

NAN. Arrest those men, Colonel. I caught them just in time! 'Tis well I left my chamber for my book. (*pointing to SAN.*) He had escaped. (*pointing to OSPREY.*) That fellow is a spy!

DOR. (*gazing at NAN with wild eyes.*) Nan!

OSP. Traitor!

SAN. (*aside.*) What is her meaning now?

WILDE. What! Demme, it is the spy! Two of them, eh? Sergeant! (*SERGEANT and soldiers advance, seize SAN. and OSP. and retire to extreme L. NAN checks DOR. who is about to follow OSPREY.*) What was the alarm without?

(*Enter MESSENGER covered with dust, and panting from hard riding.*)

MESS. Bad news—bad news, Colonel! Gowan is murdered!

WILDE (*amazed.*) Gowan murdered!

CAPT. H. (*aside.*) At last the devil takes his own.

WILDE (*seizing MESSENGER frantically.*) Gowan murdered! By whom? When? Where? Speak—dog—fool—idiot; it is a lie!

MESS. It is the truth! By Marion. Our party found the body swinging from an oak full fifty miles beyond the Wateree.

Above was written on a board: "NOW IS HUMANITY
CLEANSED OF ITS FOULEST BLOT!" and signed:
"THE SWAMP FOX."

CAPT. H. (*aside.*) This Marion has some wit.

WILDE (*raising arms above head.*) Now, curses be upon
this Marion! May God—the devil—either—all, grant I may
meet him! Put him in my power! Put him in my power;
that I may roast and tear his flesh with iron pincers! Gowan,
thou shalt be avenged, so help me—the devil. (*falls in chair,
burying face in arms at table, L. C.*)

SIR A. Faith, he is cut up about it.

SIR T. He knew him well. Two better matched and wilder
devils ne'er graced the British uniform.

WILDE (*beating table.*) Gowan! Gowan. The friend of
my schooldays! Gentlemen, I've drank more with him than
any other. I loved my Gowan. He was a devil. But one
after my own heart and soul.

CAPT. H. (*aside.*) Aye—too true.

WILDE (*springing up.*) But I'll have revenge. I'll have
revenge! (*approaching SANBORN.*) You hear, you dog? My
Gowan's dead! 'Tis ill for you and yours!

SAN. Carolina's had no better day in years than that on
on which Black Gowan died. God bless friend Marion!

WILDE (*fiercely.*) Friend Marion! Friend Marion! I
hope he is your friend. I hope he loves you. I would he
were your brother. You'll swing from the topmost branch
of yonder elm, and that before an hour is passed.

NAN. (*starting forward.*) No—no!

WILDE (*shouting.*) No! Who is it says "no" when I
command. You, you fool? To your room! Your cursed
airs have held me long enough! (*throws himself in chair with
face buried in arms at table.*)

NAN. (*aside, to DOR.*) Dot! Tell Peter to ride—ride like
the wind to Marion, and bid him hasten! Quick, Dot; if you
love me, lose no time!

DOR. (*to NAN.*) I do love you for that! (*exit DOR. R. 3 E.*)

WILDE (*springing up.*) Torches there! We'll not delay
the ceremony! (*to SAN.*) I'll hang thee twice and thrice
if but to please the soul of Gowan! Nor shall we wait till
morn! Who knows what happens 'twixt now and then?
Curse it; make haste! I hope that Marion will pass this way
and find your carcass!

NAN. (*aside.*) Aye—he may pass before you think! (*aloud
at c.*) Yes, hang the dog, and well—and high! There is a
strong cross-branch upon that elm. There the traitor used to

swing in childhood days. He'll swing there now. (*laughs hysterically.*) Hang both the rebel dogs, but first—we'll have a feast.

WILDE. A feast—with Gowan dead!

NAN. Aye—we'll drink here; within this hall in which my father died. We'll make it ring with laughter, song and dance. (*to negroes at c.*) Quick, boys! Ez—Tom—Paul—Joe! To the cellars, you lazy dogs and out with our oldest wines! (*exit negroes in confusion* L. 2 E.)

WILDE. Make merry, you fool, with Gowan dead?

NAN. Aye—we'll drink to his memory!

WILDE (*hesitating.*) Yes—we'll drink to Gowan's memory; but first, we'll hang the spies!

NAN. No—no—we'll let them wait! What! Stop to hang a traitor, when one good toast may speed friend Gowan toward heaven or hell? (*re-enter negroes with bottles in baskets.*) Quick, boys! See, gentlemen, the dust lies thick upon the bottles! My father's wines all came from France. They've stocked our cellars thirty years and more.

OMNES. A toast to friend Gowan!

SIR T. (*aside to SIR A.*) 'Twixt the hanging and the wine Wilde appears uncertain.

SIR A. Egad—'twixt the hanging and the wine, I swear I choose the latter!

WILDE. We'll drink, then; but stand there, Sergeant, with the prisoners. I swear I'll not delay the hanging. (*negroes arrange tables at L. c.*)

SIR T. Aye—a toast of blood would satisfy friend Gowan more likely than a toast in wine.

WILDE (*moodily.*) A toast of blood I would prefer.

CAPT. H. But I prefer the wine.

SIR T. And, curse me, but it makes no difference. I love to see the traitor on the rope; I love the wine. Egad, I'm always satisfied.

WILDE. Come, then; to the table and have done with it!

NAN. One moment, gentlemen! More lights, more lights! And, Ezra—(*calls EZRA to c. and whispers aside*) you need not haste, unless it is to fill their glasses. (*aloud.*) Wait till the lights come, gentlemen!

WILDE. The lights are well enough. Come! (*officers arrange themselves around table* L. c. NAN takes place beside WILDE.)

NAN. Come, boys—wine for the gentlemen. We'll drink to Gowan in our best spirits. He loved the bottle well, I hear; Then we must drink in plenty if but to honor him. Men like

him do not die every day. The toast should be a fitting one and all partake. (*to WILDE*). Shall we serve the men outside, my Colonel?

WILDE (*absently, with chin on chest.*) Yes—yes!

CAPT. H. Hold—Wilde! It is not well the men should have the liquor. This Marion is at large.

WILDE (*fiercely.*) Curse Marion! I would he did come here! Yes, let the men have wine, if but in honor of my Gowan! (*allows head to fall in hands on table before him.*)

NAN. (*brilliantly.*) Aye, I'll see to it! Fie, Captain Hawley! You do not fear the mean "Swamp Fox?" He dare not face our loyal troops. (*to EZRA.*) Ezra, you'll serve the troops without. We have a score of wines not fit for gentlemen. Stint not; there is no fear our cellars will run dry. (*exit EZRA L. 2 E.*) Alack, but Gowan shall have a royal toast! (*murmurs of satisfaction without.*) MUSIC.

(*Enter PAUL with large punch bowl.*)

Come, Paul! Bring the punch bowl here. (*PAUL sets bowl on table at NAN's elbow.*) My hand shall serve these gallant gentlemen! (*sings.*)

Then drink like a jolly good fellow,
With first, a good health to the King,
And then to the maid whose bright eyes shine,
And then to Old Bacchus, the God of wine!
We'll merrily, cherrily, drink and sing,
We'll merrily drink and sing!

(*Applause and racket from officers, pounding on table. NAN fills their glasses. All repeat chorus, lifting glasses. WILDE sits moodily. Amid racket and applause, NAN, as though by accident, pushes punch bowl from edge of table to floor.*)

NAN. (*scolding.*) Alack! You stupid Paul! Look at this mess you've made!

CAPT. H. (*aside.*) I could swear she tipped it purposely.

NAN (*standing at c. beholding ruin on floor.*) You wicked Paul! We have had that bowl a hundred years and more. My grandam prized it highly. Oh me—oh me! My gown is soaked with punch. You will wait with the toast until I change it, gentlemen?

WILDE. We'll wait for nothing. Bring on the port. We'll drink to Gowan in that.

NAN. No—no; in punch! Punch was his favorite; was it not? Joe—another bowl. Quick! More punch from the kitchens.

SIR A. More punch—more punch!

WILDE (*pounding on table.*) Port, I say! And quick about it!

NAN. But surely, Colonel,—you'll give me time to change my gown?

WILDE. Change be ——!

CAPT. H. (*interrupting.*) Colonel! Here is the port. (*negroes approach with bottles.*)

WILDE. We have no time to wait. Go to your room; we'll drink alone.

NAN. No—no! Since you will, then; I must drink to Gowan all soaked in punch as I am. (*looks down at soiled skirt.*)

CAPT. H. Mistress, he was himself in *that condition* more often than in any other.

LT. F. Upon my life, 'tis true—upon my life! (*all seated at table. Negroes fill glasses.*)

WILDE. (*rising, glass in hand*) To Gowan—the noblest Briton of them all!

CAPT. H. (*aside.*) God help the Britons!

NAN. (*rising.*) To Gowan, the noblest Briton of them all. (*all drink.*) Again, gentlemen—again! Fill their glasses, boys! To Gowan!

OMNES. To Gowan! (*drink.*)

WILDE. There never will be such another Gowan. Men of his stamp are rare. He was a very devil in the field.

SIR T. And in the camp.

SIR A. And at his cards.

LT. J. And in his cups.

LT. F. And with the women—upon my life!

CAPT. H. In fact, he was a very devil everywhere.

WILDE. He was a man—a hero—a God in uniform! Curse me, but how he slashed down those devils in our battle with Buford, some months ago!

SAN. (*vehemently.*) Battle! Butchery, you mean.

WILDE (*drinking recklessly, as NAN beckons to negro to keep filling his cup.*) You should have seen us on that day. One hundred miles we rode in five and fifty hours. Then, before the rebels knew of it, they were surrounded. We're honorable men, and we gave them terms, which were rejected. "Sir," wrote Tarleton, "resistance is in vain. You are surrounded by seven hundred troops, half infantry, and these have cannon. Cornwallis is within an hour's march;" which was a lie, you see. Our troops were scarce four hundred, and Cornwallis lay a hundred miles and more away.

SAN. (*fiercely.*) And what did that cur Tarleton? Even while the flag of truce was raised, in violation of all rules of war, your English devil ranged his men for the onset!

WILDE. Ha, ha, my friend—I scarcely thought you'd like

the tale. A trick of war, I call it; a trick of war which your thick headed countrymen all failed to see. (*to officers.*) Scarce had the flag got back within our lines, when "Charge" shouts Tarleton, and in we plunged among them. Gowan and I were riding boot to boot. How nobly his sword rose and fell. The work was merry. The rebel louts in rare confusion—some even sitting on the ground, so sudden was our dash. They did not fight—they cowered before us. One lifted up his gun; I dashed it down while Gowan raised his sword. "Mercy!" shrieked the fellow. "I spared your life at Charleston! You owe me mine!" Then Gowan laughed that devil's laugh you all have heard. "Another creditor" he cried, "then to perdition with you and the rest of them!" and with that speech he split the fellow's head from crown to shoulder! Ah, that was noble Gowan!

CAPT. H. (*aside.*) Aye—that was noble Gowan!

WILDE (*rising and dashing glass to floor.*) And now for the hanging!

NAN. No—no! Let us hear more of Gowan!

WILDE. Enough! We've drank, and now to avenge him. Sergeant! (*all rise from table.*)

NAN. (*aside.*) My God! What shall I do!

WILDE (*to SERGEANT.*) Remove the prisoners to the lawn.

NAN. (*at centre with raised arm.*) Wait! There is one toast we have forgotten.

OFFICERS. A toast forgotten?

NAN. The toast that all good Englishmen must offer first. To the table, gentlemen.

CAPT. H. She is right—to the table!

OFFICERS Aye—aye—she is right. To the table! (*all resume places at table.*)

WILDE. Be quick about it then.

NAN. Wine—more wine—and plenty of it! Open the Madeira, Port and Sherry—'tis fifty years old, gentlemen, if it's a day. (*exclamations of satisfaction from officers.*)

CAPT. H. (*aside.*) There is a meaning beneath her mood.

NAN. (*rising with wine glass in hand.*) To the King!

OFFICERS (*standing.*) To the King! (*all drink.*)

NAN. Fill again! To the Queen.

OFF. (*drinking.*) To the Queen!

NAN. How like you the Madeira, gentlemen?

CAPT. H. I never tasted better.

LT. J. Nor I.

LT. F. Upon my life, 'tis true—upon my life.

SIR A. It soothes the stomach.

SIR T. Egad, but it burns the liver.

NAN. (*merrily pushing WILDE, who has risen, back into his seat.*) Sit down, Colonel Wilde; I have another toast. Stint not, gentlemen; the wine is plentiful. I now pledge him who is the English army's pride. Who is a gallant man, if gallant men exist—(*raises glass.*) I pledge—the British Officer!

OFF. (*rising, with cheers.*) The British Officer!

CAPT. H. And now, I have a toast. I pledge the bravest lady and fairest Tory in all the colonies of King George: the rarest and most beauteous flower in all Carolina—Mistress Nan of Willington! (*NAN leaves seat and curtsys to floor as all drink with a cheer.*)

SIR A. (*drunk.*) The rarest and—most—bew—bewteous—bewt—!

WILDE (*rising.*) Come—

SIR T. (*pushing WILDE into seat.*) Sit down, Wilde! More wine! more wine! (*pushes bottle into WILDE's hand.*) Let wine chase every ill away. A chorus! to drive black melancholy from the hall. (*sings with others.*) "Then drink like a jolly good fellow, with first a good health to the King," etc.

(*Enter DOR. R. B., during chorus. NAN crosses to her. She and NAN stand R. C. with arms about one another, listening to the wild song.*)

NAN. (*looking towards WILDE.*) The man's mind runs upon his friend; I must plan some diversion. (*aside to DOR.*) Has Peter gone?

DOR. This long time since.

NAN. I fear—I fear!—The ride is long, and Wilde is sober. I have it, Dot. You will take my place at yonder table.

DOR. (*drawing back.*) I? Drink with them?

NAN. (*grasping her wrists.*) Yes—yes—Dot, for my—for your lover's sake. You must! His life depends on't.

DOR. (*bravely.*) I will try, then; but make haste.

NAN. My dearest Dorothy! I'll send down Nell and Peg. (*kisses her and exits up stairway at R. DOR approaches table and takes NAN's place.*)

OFF. (*singing at table.*)

Then drink like a jolly good fellow

With first, a good health to the King, etc.

(*Enter NELL and PEGGY in gallery. At conclusion of chorus they descend staircase at R.*)

NELL. (*at foot of stairs.*) Alack, may we join this merry company? (*SIR ANT. and SIR TOBY spring up with tipsy merriment and conduct NELL and PEG to table.*)

WILDE (*suddenly looking up from drinking and seeing DOROTHY.*) Hello—where is Mistress Nan?

DOR. She left, but for a moment to change her gown.

WILDE (*rises from table coming down R.*) I half mistrust that woman! (*goes part way up stairway at R. and comes down irresolutely. To SER.*) Sergeant, we'll need you soon. (*returns to table. Stands and addresses DOR.*) You do not drink?

DOR. (*nervously.*) No, sir—I like not wine.

WILDE. Like not wine? Curse me, would life be bearable without it. Wine is life and more than life. (*raises glass and holds between his eye and lights on mantel.*) Spirits reign there within a spirit. My Gowan ever said that twenty devils lurked within each cup.

CAPT. H. Gowan was some authority on matters pertaining to the devil.

LT. F. Upon my life, 'tis true—upon my life!

WILDE (*still standing.*) Wine is a solace for all sorrow. Wine brings forgetfulness; that boon which death itself, perhaps, cannot impart. A health to wine!

CAPT. H. (*aside.*) Grief makes a philosopher of the man.

OMNES (*rising.*) A health to wine! (*tipsy by-play of officers.*)

WILDE (*who has been drinking heavily.*) Happiness and forgetfulness. 'Tis wine alone can bring these joys which sober men will chase through life in vain. (*to DOR.*) So, Mistress, you condemn the spirit which calls up happiness?

DOR. Nay—sir, that is no happiness that ends in sorrow.

WILDE (*boisterously.*) Demme—a fair philosopher. She tells us to our faces we do wrong.

DOR. (*confused.*) Nay, sir—I know not the right and wrong of it. All men drink in these days. It is the fashion.

WILDE (*in bullying manner.*) So, demme, you bring our fashions into question?

DOR. Nay—I know naught of it. I may be wrong.

WILDE (*filling her glass.*) Come, your argument is lost, and wine, as usual, wins. *Drink!*

OMNES. Drink—drink! (*singing.*)

Then drink like a jolly good fellow

With first, a good health to the King, etc.

WILDE (*to DOR.*) Drink! We all drink here. (*stands over DOROTHY, offering wine. She drinks and chokes. Burst of laughter from officers.*) Another glass—you'll like it soon enough.

DOR. No, I will not.

WILDE. You will not? You're a saucy wench—and a pretty

one as well. There, dost like that better? (*kisses her, DOROTHY leaves table indignantly, coming down L.*)

SAN. (*indignantly.*) You coward! MUSIC

WILDE (*awakening from drunken admiration of DOROTHY.*) What?

SAN. You coward! To take advantage of a woman!

WILDE (*fiercely, coming down L. c.*) You dog—you spy—you'll sing a different tune upon the gallows. Aye, and dance.

(*Enter NAN at head of stairway gorgeously dressed in satin gown bedecked with jewels.*)

NAN. (*across banister.*) Who spoke of dancing? The very thing I was to propose.

WILDE. We've had enough of you and your delays. I'll hang this fellow now.

NAN. (*appealing to officers in injured tone.*) Gentlemen, he has had enough of me and my delays! Have I bored you? Has my entertainment been unpleasant? I appeal to you, now, if it has. Why should Colonel Wilde give preference in dancing to the rebel? The floor is good in here—let us dance first. The traitor can dance afterwards—on air. (*officers crowd about, admiring her.*)

CAPT. H. (*kissing NAN's hand.*) Colonel Wilde is the most ungallant dog in His Majesty's service.

SIR A. You are so beautiful. (*NAN smiles, whispers, and flirts with officers.*)

WILDE. Come! Enough of this!

SIR T. (*intoxicated, fiercely.*) Sit down, Wilde, or I'll crack your head!

LT. J. We're going to dance!

LT. F. (*drunk.*) Upon my life, 'tis true—upon my life!

CAPT. H. Aye—with Mistress Willington. (*applause, and shouts of "aye—with the charming Mistress Willington!" Wilde looks around helplessly.*)

WILDE (*drinking at table, aside.*) Curse me, I'll make things merry here. (*aloud.*) I'll dance, then; but on one condition. This pretty wench must step a minuet with me. (*points to DOROTHY.*)

DOR. (*shrinking from him.*) No—no!

NAN. (*in anxious undertone.*) Dot—Dot—for my sake—

DOR. Nan, you know not what you ask. The wretch insulted me while you were gone.

NAN. (*quickly.*) Insulted my Dorothy? (*to WILDE, smiling.*) Perhaps I shall kill you for that insult, Colonel.

WILDE (*insolently.*) I don't doubt but what you would, were the chance to offer, Mistress.

NAN. (*turning to DOR.*) But you will dance with him?

DOR. (*hanging head.*) Yes.

WILDE. Demme, this suits me well. Sergeant,—withdraw your men. Nay, leave the prisoner. Tie him in a chair to watch our minuet. (*to SAN.*) Look your last, you dog, upon our merriment, for when this measure ends, *your* dance begins. Upon the soul of Gowan, I swear this is the last delay. (*soldiers fasten SAN. in chair at L. and exit with OSPREY L. 1 E. Negroes in background, scraping fiddles. NAN minuets with CAPT. H; DOR. with COL. WILDE. WILDE ogles her; she shrinks from his amorous glances. SIR TOBY and NELL and SIR ANT. and PEG are partners. They dance.*)

CAPT. H. (*interrupting in middle of dance.*) Stop! I could swear I heard the galloping of hoofs.

NAN. (*in most brilliant manner, while stepping minuet.*) No—no! on with the minuet, How ungallant to interrupt my dance! Alack, that *you* the favored one should be the first to find a fault. Perhaps Captain Hawley is weary. Will another gentlemen take his place? (*OFFICERS all step forward. NAN smiles.*) All of you? Ah, I could not dance with all. I curtsy to you, gentlemen, (*curtsys R. and L. Indistinct galloping of hoofs heard off R.*) I curtsy to the gallant officers of His Majesty's service. I curtsy—

CAPT. H. (*interrupting.*) I am right. Stop that music. Quick, Wilde; there is something wrong without (*shot without. Hasty footsteps. Exit CAPT. H. L. 2 E. OFFICERS stupid with wine. Negroes huddle at back.*)

SIR T. Curse it—it is an attack! (*draws sword and crosses R. 1 E.*)

LT. F. Upon my life, 'tis— (*shot off R. 1 E. SIR TOBY falls across doorway. DOROTHY on stairway. Negroes huddle in confusion at back. NAN at C. with hand to heart gazing at WILDE with flashing eyes. Din without. Shots. Cries of "MARION! MARION!"*)

SIR A. It is the Swamp Fox! Fly for your lives!

WILDE (*to NAN.*) Traitor—you brought him here! Now cursed be this Marion, and let me cross my sword with his. But first, my vengeance here, for my poor Gowan. (*to SAN. as he draws sword.*) Thou helpless cur—thou art not saved—no, by the devil! Not the rope shall bring thy just desert, but my own sword. (*rushes on SAN. with uplifted sword, when NAN who has quickly crossed to SANBORN'S chair draws two pistols from cabinet and discharges one at WILDE, who falls.*)

NAN. (*fiercely.*) I said I'd kill thee, dog! (*to others, defiantly.*) Will any other try his medicine? (*more shots without.*)

OFFICERS stagger off L. 2 E. NAN rushes up center, flinging open casement and crying.) Kill—kill the hounds; exterminate the dogs in red! (*patriot soldiery, some dressed in deer-skins, others in regimentals, rush in.*)

(*Enter OSPREY L. 1 E. He cuts SANBORN's bonds and crosses to DOROTHY, who cowers on stairs. NELL and PEG at L.*)

SAN. (*springing to his feet.*) A sword! A sword!

NAN. (*throwing her arms about his neck.*) No! No! Do not go now! See! the battle is with yours; the British are in flight! (*as SANBORN folds her in his arms.*) My love! My George! I did it all for thee.

CURTAIN.

POEMS

LONG AGO.

The old, old friends of Long Ago;
 How Time has swept them by!
 Those youthful heads are white as snow,
 Or 'neath the greensward lie.
 And sometimes as I wander through those once-familiar lanes
 I seem to hear their merry shouts in long-forgotten games.

I seem to hear the old, old songs,
 Which, when the moon was high,
 Upon the river happy throngs
 Sang to the evening sky.
 Dear, dear old songs; with me their memory shall never cease:
 For none sing now as we once sang of Bonnie Eloise

And Home Sweet Home and Auld Lang Syne
 And Annie Laurie dear:
 How seldom in my life's decline
 These songs break on mine ear!
 But long ago, when this old frame thrilled with youth's sturdy power,
 Those tuneful strains, well-known to all, soothed many a passing hour.

Ah, Long Ago: sweet Long Ago,
 So filled with mem'ries dear:
 Though later years brought care and woe,
Thy days were bright with cheer.
 Bring back those friends whose happy youth with my youth was entwined:
 Awake the many sleeping ones the years have left behind.

Recall my Jack, dear boyhood friend
 In frolic, toil and pain;
 But one short hour let me spend
 With bright-eyed Jack again.
 Roll back that stone so white and cold, upon the green-sloped hill:
 Much of my heart was buried there with Jack, so pale and still.

And others lie not far from him.
 Beneath the willow tall,
 Joe, Bert and Ed and happy Jim
 Rest till the Trump shall call.
 Above them gentle zephyrs breathe their rythm through the trees:
 Around, a growing city of troubled hearts at ease.

Joe was our merchant, Bert a quack,
 Jim, lazy, good and true:
 From Gettysburg they brought him back;
 A martyr to the Blue.

Our Ed, through life pursuing that phantom charger, Fame,
 Fell fainting by the wayside—with Death the phantom came.

Hark! Did I hear a merry peal
 Of laughter through the glades?
 Or was it mem'ry made me feel
 The presence of the maids?

Alas, the wind laughs mockingly while I stand here alone:
 The Father long ago has called those little maidens Home.

Ruth,—blue-eyed, golden-haired and prim;
 We each loved Ruth in turn.
 She gave her heart to gallant Jim:
 That little heart did burn.

Yes, yes; she married in good time, but ne'er forgot, I ween,
 Her handsome soldier lover who lay sleeping 'neath the green.

And laughing Bess,—a stern old maid
 She prophesied she'd be.
 Out on the truthless little jade;
 Her husbands numbered three.

And stately Lil, and hoyden Jo, and warm-hearted Estelle,
 Are happy figures in that Long Ago I love so well.

And there's another, dearer still
 Than my dear Jack of old.
 She also lies upon the hill;
 Long gathered to the Fold.

Oh God, what crime, what sin of mine brought punishment severe
 As that which, in a moment's breath, took her I loved so dear.

The stars were bright, the evening calm
 When, 'mid rejoicing loud,
 The old hay-wagon from the farm
 Took forth our merry crowd.

My Nell, my sweetest bride-to-be, was nestling at my side;
 Nor did we heed those romping friends throughout that fatal ride.

We spoke that night as lovers speak;
 We planned as lovers plan.
 How each the *other's* joy should seek,
 And Love all troubles span.
 And talking thus, the hours flew, the merry ride was made:
 And cheery home-lights shone below as we plunged down the grade.

A light gleamed on the rail before!
 A shout of terror rose!
 There came the engine's heavy roar!
 The heart within me froze.
 I sprang afoot. My arms sought Nell, across the side to dash.
 Too late! The others swept between. There came a mighty *crash*.

Oh God, that *she* should be the one
 Selected for that fate!
 Her pure young life so soon undone,
 While mine must linger late.
 With tender bosom well-nigh crushed, the dear life ebbing fast;
 Her dull pained eyes were fix'd on mine until the spirit passed.

That night the joy went from my life,
 That night I wandered far;
 My anguished soul, in bitter strife,
 With God and man at war.
 For what remained to strive for then, without her smile to bless?
 Could all the honors of the world equal her one caress?

And since that night the years have rolled,
 The seasons quickly flown;
 And this sad heart is growing cold,
 For I am left alone.
 Since Nelly went, the old, old friends have been swept by Time's waves
 Far up upon the hillside;—how many are the graves!



A THOUGHT.

We make or mar our happiness,
 It lies on every side:
 The greatest blessings ofttime spring
 From things that we deride.

LINES TO MY LADY'S BRACELET.

A young lady of the author's acquaintance possesses a bracelet on which the name "Jack" is 'graven. It inspired these verses.)

In the olden days in Athens, a monument was raised
In honor of a deity whom good Athenians praised:
Of pure marble was the pillar, rising grandly from the sod,
And on the shaft were writ these words, HAIL TO THE UNKNOWN GOD!

Full nineteen hundred years had passed and Athens and her fame
Were crumbling in the dust of time, her glories but a name:
When, 'mid another people, in a land far o'er the sea,
A quiet woman had her shrine and praised her deity.

The shrine was not of massive stone, commanding to the sight;
The name she loved was never heard upon Olympus' height:
The first a silver bracelet was and 'graven on its back
Appeared the unknown deity—plain, unpretentious "Jack."

A sorcerer had used that name, predicting it was he
Who held that woman's happiness, her fond husband to be;
The woman, faithful to her love long ere the lover came,—
Cherished the little that she had, and thus revered—a name.

Her Jack may be a Hercules, or midget of mean size;
A soldier, statesman, merchant, clerk, rogue, fool, or scholar wise.
It matters little to the faith of her who waits the tryst,
Her heart with love o'erflowing and his name upon her wrist.



TO BRONTË.

(Written on the fly-leaf of "Jane Eyre.")

God bless you, little Brontë!
You gave the world a book
Through which future generations
Into your heart may look.
For Jane Eyre's joys were your joys,
Her sorrows were your pain;
And he who writes as you wrote
Will never write in vain.

LIFE'S VOYAGER.

An atom in flesh, I spring from the womb
 Of a race unknown to me.
 I am suckled, I live—and all too soon
 This body goes down into the tomb,
 In the wake of my ancestry.

Wherefore and whyfore, I oft cry in vain,
 Am I hurled from pole to pole?
 A puppet of fate in this mighty game—
 Hurling toward regions no man can name—
 Thus speeds my ethereal soul.

Battling the waves on this river of life,
 Never from danger quite free:
 Skimming o'er currents where dread rocks are rife,
 Facing the storm-king's furious strife,
 My frail bark speeds on to the sea.

Loved ones and dear friends, one by one are swept
 Away on those cruel waves.
 Oh, sad this voyage, for much have I wept
 O'er those cherished ones, who long have slept.
 In the depths of their sea-green graves.

In vain I endeavor to guide my bark
 In channels where I would go;
 But a hand, as of Fate, from out the dark
 Unerringly steers me from that mark
 Into courses troubled and slow.

God pity me now in this awful flight
 Toward shores of the Great Unknown:
 God give me a star, whose hallowed light
 Will guide my soul through these depths of night
 To the Sun of his Mighty Throne.

*YOUTH'S DREAM.*

There's a little woman waiting
 somewhere on the strand of Time,
 Gazing wistful o'er the waters
 for a sail she knows is mine;
 And as down Life's broad river
 my bark speeds toward the sea,
 I'll behold that little woman
 waiting on the shore for me:
 Then I'll quickly steer in closer
 to receive her outstretched hand,
 A ring I'll put upon it, and
 in my bark she'll stand;
 Then away upon Life's journey
 which cannot pass too slow
 With that gentle little woman
 at my side through weal and woe.

OUR NANCY.

(A Springtown Lover's Lament.)

Alas, she's going to leave us now,
 The girl us fellows fancy;
 A city jay has cum along
 And carried off our Nancy.

Jest listen and I'll tell you all
 Of how it came about, sir;
 And how a Carlisle man *got in*
 While Springtown chaps were out, sir.

Our Nancy wus the pootiest gal
 Who hung up in this section
 And jest to get a glimpse of her
 Would stir up your affection.

Her hair wus light, her eyes were blue,
 Her figger wus divine, sir:
 She'd make an old pianny talk,
 And sing jest something fine, sir.

We fellows used to stop 'round there
 Pretendin' to see—Popper.
 The Recordin' Angel must 'ave sighed
 As he set down thet whopper.

And other times we'd get up spunk
 And call right on the girl, sir;
 The glances she let out them eyes
 Jest set our heads a-whirl, sir.

Who were we? Well, let's see: there wus
 Me, Rube Hicks, Tim and Sorden;
 And Josh, who hung 'round there so much
 Folks thought they took him boardin'.

And Nan wus ekal to this strain
 O' masculine attention;
 The love she gave us in return
 Was nothin' much to mention.

In fact she practised on us lads
 A rubbin' off her greenness;
 And if we didn't *all* bennyfit,
 I'd call it dog-gone meanness.

One summer Nancy went away
 Up to a place called Parkers,
 And got in with a jolly set,—
 Right-down, tremenjous larkers.

And when she cum home, her Ma sed:
 "You don't go there agen, Miss!"
 She feared Nan would become engaged,
 Or do something as sen'sless.

So next year *Mama* named the place
 For Nan her time to while, sir;
 And packed her charming daughter off
 To the town of Carlisle, sir.

Though Nan hed cried and stomped her foot,
 Say'n: "Parkers, or not any!"
 She guv in to her Pa and Ma
 Becos they wus too many.

And now I cum unto the part
 More stranger than all fiction:
 And thet this tale is true, I'll prove
 Beyond all contradiction.

Nan's foot hed scarcely touched the street
 Outside the Carlisle station,
 Ere she met him who wus to be
 Her *intymate* relation.

The man he guv a great big start,
 Then felt quite low and meanly;
 For never hed he sot his eyes
 Upon a gal so queenly.

But queens is mortals at the best,
 And woman's made for winning.
 Ses he, "While she stays in Carlisle,
Thet time will be my inning."

He rowed and druv her 'round them parts
 Much oftener than often;
 And did the things one kalkerlates
 A woman's heart will soften.

And, to make a long story short,
 It ended in a church, sir;
 Us Springtown lads were clean forgot
 And left out in the lurch, sir.

Now, mothers all, take my advice:
 Don't try to drive your daughter!
 Or she'll be sure to do the thing
 You didn't think she oughter.



HIS IDEAL.

He was waiting for the maiden
 He had pictured; O, so sweet!
 His *ideal* he fondly called her—
 This maid he was to meet.
 And he spurned the girl who liked him,
 With all others in his set:
 For this *ideal* he was waiting—
 And he's waiting for her yet.

THE VOICES OF THE SOUL.

Being a conflict in the soul of man on his first conception of the littleness of life, and the uselessness of all human vanity.)

VOICE OF WISDOM.

Power, riches, fame, ambition,
Laurels of the great and brave:
Mockeries of man's condition
All are compassed by the grave.

VOICE OF DESPONDENCY.

All is lowly, all is mortal
In this whirl of Life's short race;
All must enter at Death's portal,—
All to conq'ring Time give place.

VOICE OF CYNICISM.

Wherefore struggle when the prizes
Are too often drawn with tears?
Naught above oblivion rises,
Why then work throughout the years?

VOICE OF LUST.

Rather fill them with keen pleasure,
Ease Time's footsteps with a tune.
Drink, be merry, in full measure!
Death will cheat you all too soon.

VOICE OF EVIL.

Downward, ever downward falling,
Thus the souls of men descend.
Plunge into the merry brawling;
Live! To-morrow all things end.

VOICE OF TRUTH.

False! Above this chaos, dwelling
Far beyond the worldly goal,
Gleams a star of Hope, foretelling
Future for the Heav'n-born Soul.

VOICE OF ENCOURAGEMENT.

Trust it. Naught amid this sorrow
Can its peerless lustre dim:
It will guide you through Death's morrow;
It alone will lead to Him.

VOICE OF WARNING.

Naught is yours: each talent given
Cometh from your God, above.
Treasure well these gifts from Heaven:
Let their work be that of Love.

VOICE OF CONSCIENCE.

For each talent in your keeping
Full account must rendered be.
Arise,—your soul has been sleeping:
Sloth is man's great enemy.

VOICE OF EXHORTATION.

Work! The night too soon is falling
 For the task that lies before.
 Angels' voices will be calling
 Souls to rest forevermore.

VOICE OF LOVE.

Do whate'er the heart, dictating,
 Tells is for the greatest good;
 Lose no time in vain debating:
 Act, as lofty spirits should.

VOICE OF FAITH.

Then, when weary toil is over,
 Forth the gladdened soul will roam
 On its journey to discover
 Mercy at the Judgment Throne.



THE POETS.

The poets are men who have suffered,
 Their wisdom springs from the heart,
 Which is chastened by pain
 And cleansed with the rain
 Of tears that from eyelids start.

Their clay is the clay of all mortals,
 But God has fashioned the mould;
 And the secrets of life
 With their sorrows and strife,
 He throws in the form to unfold.

And the joys of the poets are great joys:
 Their sorrows have depths unknown
 To the versatile mind
 Of careless mankind,
 Among whom the poets have grown.

They have viewed the land which is promised,
 Have stood on the airy height
 And beheld the sweet vales
 Where love never fails,
 The land of Content and Delight.

But the climb to that height has been rugged
 And marked with anguish and sigh:
 While the great soul aspired
 The frail body tired,
 And reaches the summit—to die.

Then listen well to their message,
 It springs from a God-given grace;
 And the songs of those years
 So burdened with tears
 Will awaken the soul of a Race!

TIES.

(Written when presenting a scarf to a young lady.)

In this great world a little thing
Will often-time a treasure buy:
And life-long friendships sometimes spring
From gifts less binding than a tie.

You'll see them worn where'er you go,
You'll feel their influence by-and-bye;
For greater ties exist, you know,
Than those seen by the mortal eye.

And *ties*, you'll find, control our lives,
Will move us when we can't tell why:
Bring some men misery with wives,
And others joy—this mighty tie.

And now were I to speak the truth,
In all good faith, I'd try
To catch your favor, sweet Miss Ruth
And bind it firmly with a tie.



STICK TO IT.

If you have a task to do,
Stick to it!
Persevere until 'tis through,
Stick to it!
Time and thought to labor lend,
Useful hours you will spend;
Work is every man's best friend—
Stick to it!

Though the task be dull and drear,
Stick to it!
Brighter times are drawing near,
Stick to it!
Fortune favors him who strives.
False contentment stunts men's lives;
He who labors *always* thrives—
Stick to it!

When you know your cause is right,
Stick to it!
Conquer evil with your might,
Stick to it!
Be not one of those who play,
Stringing idle day on day;
Labor is the nobler way—
Stick to it!

HER GLOVES.

A pair of gloves found in a pocket after escorting a young lady to a dance, were responsible for the following.)

Two little gloves so soft and white,
 Left in my pocket since yesterday;
 Partners with mine for a single night,
 (Fleeting partners that cannot stay.)
 Back to the owner I give them now,
 Her dainty hands soon to enfold:
 Will they betray my secret; how
 I sent with them a wish of gold.

THE WISH.

Stay with your owner throughout the years,
 Faded and worn though you may be;
 Teach her that mid this vale of tears
 Youth is the brightest memory.
 Teach that a woman, brave, true and kind,
 Is the noblest jewel this world can hold:
 Teach that the beauties of the mind
 Outweigh the flesh a thousand fold.
 Be with her when Life's twilight falls,
 And, as the current is ebbing fast,
 Bring joy to her heart as she recalls
 The happy days of the golden Past.



SOLILOQUY.

How puny are our lives!
 What changeling dreams we chase from day to day
 And waste the time and talents God has given.
 O, Father, chide Thy foolish lambs who stray,
 And bring them in the path that leads to heaven.



HYMN.

I'd rather be a simple child
 And earn the favor of the Lord,
 Than drive the world with envy wild
 Of wealth and knowledge that I stored.

I'd rather live and die content
 With knowing that I had not sinned,
 Than follow wilful Pleasure's bent,
 Or gain the treasures of the Ind.

I'd rather starve in a cold world,
 My life, of joys and comforts bare;
 Than carry up a soul that's soiled,
 And fear to meet the Father there.

HADLEY

(A BUCKS COUNTY ROMANCE IN 5 ACTS)

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NOTE :—*The play is laid in the beautiful hill-country of Bucks County, Pennsylvania.*

CAST.

DUDLEY BRANT, *a country gentleman of means.*

WESTERN BILLY, *a product of Arizona.*

EDWARD KINGSLEY, *from the city.*

CALEB BUMMELL, *a close-fisted countryman,*

DR. PEABODY, *a young doctor.*

ELMER, }
HARVEY, } *country boys.*

SHERIFF.

SUE PERKINS, *Dudley's house-keeper, a man-hunting spinster.*

JANE HOLLY, *Sue's friend, engaged in the same occupation.*

TILLY EMMONS, *courted by Caleb.*

POLLY BRINTON, *Sue's niece, in love with the doctor.*

ANN APPLEBY, *whose tongue has a habit of saying what it means, and saying it quickly.*

KATE BERWYN, *of Berwyn Farm, the belle of Hadley.*

Bucks County countrymen, sheriff's posse, etc.

ACT I.—*Dudley Brant's Garden. (Two strangers in Hadley.)*

ACT II.—*Berwyn—The following morning. (A recognition.)*

ACT III.—*The Berwyn Orchard—Night. (Beneath Kate's window.)*

ACT IV.—*Dudley Brant's Library. (For Dudley's sake.)*

ACT V.—*Same as Act I.—Two days later. (The end as it should be.)*

TIME : JUNE, 1885.

DESCRIPTION.

DUDLEY BRANT :—A tall man of middle age with gray hair and pleasant manners.

WESTERN BILLY :—Swarthy, and rather picturesque character. Wears leather leggings, sombrero, and rough dress generally suggestive of the frontier.

EDWARD KINGSLEY :—A handsome, dark man of thirty, faultlessly dressed.

CALEB BUMMELL :—Forty-four around the chest, and five feet seven in his stockings ; middle-aged, round-faced, didactic countryman.

DR. PEABODY :—Young country doctor of twenty-eight ; plainly dressed.

ELMER, }
HARVEY, } Red-headed country boys.

SHERIFF :

SUE PERKINS :—Sharp-tongued spinster, embodying many female foibles.

JANE HOLLY :—Spinster, very thin ; dresses in black ; eccentric and nervous ; wears poke bonnet and carries fan.

TILLIE EMMONS :—A stout, good-natured woman of forty-five.

POLLY BRINTON :—Soubrette.

ANN APPLEBY :—Plain, hard-working countrywoman.

KATE BERWYN :—A brown beauty ; not above medium height.

ACT I.

SCENE: DUDLEY BRANT's garden. (*Handsome country homestead in foreground at R.; hedge extending across rear of stage, with opening at C., and landscape of hills in background. Rose-bower at L. C., consisting of rustic seat in light frame bower which surrounds it on two sides. Trailing vine and roses surround bower. Flower bed at C. with rustic seat in front; rustic table and chairs at R. C.; climbing roses about netting at house R.*)

(*WESTERN BILLY at C., standing with legs spread apart tipsily, flask in left hand; HARVEY at L., leaning against rose bower with arms folded; ELMER seated in chair beside table at R. C., his elbows resting on his knees, while whittling with large jack-knife.*)

BILLY. Boys, I've been in this dead, sleepy old village of Hadley three days now; heven't I?

HAR. Thet you have, Billy.

BILLY. And I don't know much of anybody, 'cept you two youngsters whom I'm livin' with; do I?

HAR. Thet you don't, Billy.

BILLY. And all these country fellers, and Dudley Brant, who own big farms 'round here, look on Western Billy as a good-for-nothin' from Arizona; and they think I'm a liar; don't they, Harvey?

HAR. I reckon they do, Billy.

BILLY (*looking from HARVEY to ELMER*). And you two fellers think I'm a liar because of the stories I've been telling about Arizona; don't yer?

HAR. I guess we do, Billy.

BILLY. Well, I *am* a liar. (*lifts flask for long draught; then holding up one finger impressively.*) Sometimes! But I ain't lying when I say I'm the richest man in Hadley at this moment.

ELMER (*looking up and speaking with heavy, slow voice*). You don't look it, Billy.

BILLY (*with drunken earnestness*). Now, look-a-yere. Do you suppose I'd leave Arizona—wild, glorious Arizona—to come to this sleepy old hole called Hadley, ef there wasn't money in it? Wall, I guess not. I come East 'cause there's *big money*

in' it, an' I've got a little game to play in Hadley that's got a farm at the end of it.

HAR. (*incredulously*). A farm, Billy?

BILLY. And a wife, too, mebbe.

ELM. (*drawling voice*). Anything else, Billy?

BILLY. Now, shet up, Elmer, and listen a moment. (*standing with legs apart*). Ther two biggest farms in Hadley is this one, owned by Dudley Brant here, (*jerks thumb in direction of house at R.*) and Berwyn, over thar, (*waves flask toward L. 3 E.*) which you think is owned by Kate Berwyn. Well, thet's wrong.

HAR. No—thet's the truth.

ELM. (*positively*). Thet's the truth, Billy, 'cause the farm was left to Kate by old Mother Berwyn when she died five years ago.

BILLY. Now, jest shet up a minute, and I'll tell you something. Did you kids ever hear of Mother Berwyn havin' a son?

HAR. Yes, we did.

BILLY. A son who ran away out West fifteen years ago?

HAR. And who was killed. He was shot in a gambling saloon out there.

ELM. (*decisively*). We know thet, 'cause we read it in the newspapers.

BILLY. Now, don't you be so sure, Elmer; those newspapers sometimes get things twisted. Now, do you know what Mother Berwyn's will says? (*boys shake heads*). Well, it says this: (*deliberately*). It says that the farm is to go to Kate, providing William Berwyn—who was Mother Berwyn's real child—never shows up again. Ef he does show up, Kate has the choice of marryin' him, or of clearing off the diggings altogether. Hev you got thet through those red-headed noddles of yours?

HAR. Thet may be right, Billy, but I don't believe it.

BILLY (*interrupting*). But I've got nothin' agin' Kate.—Kate is the prettiest and sweetest little woman in Hadley; ain't she?

ELM. You told the truth thet time, Billy.

BILLY (*warming with liquor*). And all these countrymen and country gentlemen who come drivin' up to Berwyn and drivin' away agin, air sweet on Kate; aren't they? And they think thet Kate will marry one of them; don't they?

HAR. I reckon they do, Billy.

BILLY (*fiercely*). Wall, not one of 'em's goin' to marry Kate, dy'e hear? (*threateningly*) And I want to see the feller who's going to try it.

HAR. Pooh, Billy, you'll have to shoot half of Buck's County ef you want to keep 'em away from Kate. Why, durned ef I

don't think the Sheriff hisself is in love with her. You couldn't wollop the Sheriff, Billy.

BILLY (*pacing stage at c., dejectedly*). I'm a loafer and a drunkard; ain't I?

ELM. Well, you're not exac'ly a gentleman, Billy.

BILLY. Curse it! (*with fierce gesture of impatience, flings flask across stage*). Boys; thar goes my ruination! (*solemnly*) Thar goes the last drop of liquor I ever want to see.

HAR. You can't do without it, Billy, you've gone too far.

BILLY. I'm a miserable, poor devil; ain't I? I ain't fit—why, I ain't fit to blacken Kate Berwyn's shoes. I'm a beast, and Kate's a lady; ain't thet so?

HAR. Well, Billy, Kate's a lady.

ELM. Altho' she does work harder than some folks *think* ladies ought ter. But she's got manners, and she's good, and talks nice and kind; and yes, by jiminy, Kate's a lady.

BILLY. (*bitterly*). Kate Berwyn wouldn't think of marrying a poor devil like me; would she?

HAR. I don't think she would, Billy.

ELM. I know she wouldn't.—Not after having men like Dudley Brant after her.

BILLY (*with fierce animation*). Because he is rich, and owns a big farm; eh?

ELM. No; 'cause he's a gentleman, and thet's something better, Billy.

BILLY (*vehemently*). And who is Kate Berwyn to set herself up like thet? Do you want to know who Kate Berwyn is? Why she's a nobody—thet's who she is. Her mother is dead and, her father didn't take the trouble to give her a name. She came to Berwyn as a baby, and her mother died there on the night Kate was born; and old Mrs. Berwyn took her and brought her up, 'cause she knew Kate's mother so well. And she's a charity child, thet's what Kate Berwyn is; nothin' more and nothin' less. (*with mad sarcasm*). And she's the young lady who sets herself up and has so many men running after her. Do you fellers want to know who Kate Berwyn's goin' to marry? Why, she's goin to marry me; thet's who she's goin' to marry. Me, Western Billy, who never was a gentleman and never will be. Me, who has knocked about the toughest parts of Arizona, and who has been as tough and as bad as the next one. Thet's who Kate Berwyn's goin' to marry. And you'll find she will be glad ef I'll have her. (*clapping hands to head, vehemently*). Where's thet whisky? Curse it! Where's thet whisky? (*runs up c., turning, facing the boys from opening between hedges; with drunken intensity*) And let those other fellers look out!

I'm no tenderfoot, and I can use a gun on occasion. And I will use it; tho' I swing for it. (*in rage*) Kate is goin' ter marry me; dy'e hear? She's goin' ter marry me, Western Billy. (*exit R 3 E., mumbling with drunken rage and stupor. HARVEY runs up stage, looking after him.*)

HAR. (*turning to ELMER*). Look here, Elmer, we'll hev to keep an eye on Billy, or he'll be shootin' somebody. We'd better be hiding thet pistol of his.

ELM. Better be hiding thet whisky bottle, you mean. 'Tain't the gun but the rum which is dangerous; I'm thinking. (*rising and slouching up c.*) Come along Harvey; we'll follow him. (*exit HARVEY and ELMER R. 3 E.; ELMER whittling industriously.*)

(*Enter EDWARD KINGSLEY R. 3 E., turns, looking nonchalantly after BILLY and the boys.*)

EDW. (*coming down R. c.; glancing at house R.*). Now, who lives here, I wonder? Don't know, and don't care; so withor without the householder's permission, I'll step into the garden and view that pretty bit of scenery below. (*leans with one foot on bench L. c. back, rolling cigarette, while looking off L. 3 E.*). So that is Berwyn. The place is a pretty one. And worth some money to the man who owns it. Worth considerable money I should say, judging from those three hundred acres. Yes, if I owned Berwyn—or had a part ownership—I could live like a gentleman. (*pause, while lighting cigarette, and puffing meditatively.*) My entire career of thirty-one years has been spent in an endeavor to live like a gentleman. Unfortunately, I was born poor—it's damn inconvenient to be born poor—particularly for an ambitious man like myself. (*with complacency*). However, I have improved a few opportunities, and I may now look upon myself as a gentleman—a gentleman in all but income. (*turns toward L 3 E.*). I wonder if Kate remembers me? She should; our parting seven years ago was a trifle too sentimental to be readily forgotten. However, a world of change may take place in seven years. Kate was sincere enough then; the question is: Has she changed since? (*pause while blowing smoke across hedge, then with emphasis*) A devilish pretty place is Berwyn. (*with egotistic complacency*). Yes, I am convinced that Kate has all the virtues of the young woman I wish to make Mrs. Kingsley. I know I shall fall desperately in love with her. (*remains smoking meditatively, looking off L. 3 E.*)

(*Enter SUE PERKINS and JANE HOLLY from house, R. 2 E. Descend steps of piazza without noticing EDWARD's presence.*)

JANE. So you think Tilly and Caleb air engaged, Sue?

SUE (*decisively*). I know it; and what's more Tilly Emmons

takes my patience. One man is enough for any woman, I'm thinking.

JANE (*sitting pensively at c.*). Thet reminds me, Sue; I was reading the other day thet there be *four women* to every *man*.

SUE (*pacing stage*). And there is Tilly Emmons fishing for Caleb before her first husband is cold a year. It's shameful, and there should be a law agin it.

JANE (*plaintively*). But think, Sue—*four women* to every *man*! (*sighs*). No wonder the men air so conceited.

SUE. Tilly should wait at least a year.

JANE. Think how long some women have waited.

SUE. And Caleb Bummell is a fool.

JANE. No, Sue—not such a fool as he's ignorant. Plumb ignorant of the kind of woman best suited fer him. Now what man as wuzn't would take Tilly Emmons?

SUE. Pooh, Jane Holly—you're jealous.

JANE (*primly*). I thank you, I'm above that vulgarity. I'm not a marrying woman.

SUE (*witheringly*). No; you don't seem to be.

JANE (*angrily*). Laws sakes! You needn't talk, Sue. It's village gossip how you've fished for Caleb, and for plenty of others at that.

SUE (*with spirit*). Pooh—don't throw stones in glass houses, Jane Holly. You're jest as bad, only quieter and not so attractive.

JANE (*fanning violently*). You won't stay here long when Mr. Dudley learns of your talk. This tellin' people he wants you to marry him—Dudley won't stand thet, Sue.

SUE. I know my business, Jane Holly. Start people *talking* of a man doing something, and he'll do it, ef he *can*. It spurs him on. Now Dudley *can* marry me, sence I have no objections. So all he needs is the spurring. You see, Jane?

JANE. It 's good for you he likes Polly.

SUE. He likes both, Jane, and has said time and again he couldn't get better housekeepers. Now, thet is something. Convince a man you're a cook and its a step towards his affections. Their hearts and their stomachs lie close together, I'm thinking.

JANE. Polly does the cooking. Mark my words, Sue; you won't stay here long when she marries the Doctor.

SUE. Which won't be in a hurry. His practice won't keep *him*—much less a wife too.

JANE. Yet you're always insinuating he is too young to be a good Doctor. Thet's mean, Sue—and—

SUE. (*catching sight of EDWARD, and suddenly seizing JANE's arm*). Jane!

JANE (*excitedly screwing her head around*). What is it—a bug?

SUE. A man! (*points to EDWARD*.)

JANE. Oh, my goodness!

SUE. (*impressively*). A young, good-looking man!

JANE (*flustered and smoothing out skirt*). Are we all tidy, Sue?

SUE. The handsome stranger I was telling you of. He arrived in Hadley to-day and he's staying down at the hotel. Now leave him to me, Jane.

JANE (*promptly*). Indeed, I'll do nothing of the sort!

SUE. (*at c., coughing to attract EDWARD's attention*). Ahem!

EDW. (*turning, and removing hat politely*). I beg, pardon. Am I trespassing?

SUE (*aside to JANE*). Jane, he's lovely!

JANE. Such black, curly hair. I always had a weakness for black curly hair. (*smooths her own hair*).

SUE (*primly, to EDWARD*). May we know the name of the gentleman addressing us?

EDW. Certainly. I am Edward Kingsley—at your service.

SUE. This is my friend, Miss Holly; I am Miss Perkins.

EDW. (*bowing gracefully*). Delighted, I am sure.

JANE (*gushingly*). Yours is such a bewtiful name, Mr. Kingsley.

EDW. (*smiling*). Thank you.

JANE (*sentimentally*). It reminds me of someone I knew when I was a girl.

SUE (*cuttingly*). You always had a wonderful memory, Jane Holly. (*aside*). The impudent huzzy, to address a stranger like that! (*gushingly*). But the name is not so handsome as its owner, Mr. Kingsley.

EDW. (*bowing with amused expression*). Thank you; thank you. (*SUE curtsys in stiff country fashion. Aside.*) Well, this is a pair of rare specimens. However, they may give me some information. (*aloud*). Can you tell me who owns the farm just below? (*points L. 3 E.*)

SUE (*sweetly*). That is Berwyn: a large farm, is it not? A little larger, but not so well kept as ours. I say "ours," because Dudley and I live here. I am Dudley's housekeeper (*with meaning*)—as yet.

EDW. (*smiling*). A fortunate man is Dudley with such a charming housekeeper.

SUE (*moving closer to EDWARD and smiling sweetly*). You men from the city are such flatterers.

EDW. (*aside*). Well, she is a specimen. (*aloud*) What sort of a man is this Berwyn?

SUE. Bless you, there is no man. Only Kate, a pretty faced chit, who lives there with her servants. And that is what I consider disgraceful.

JANE (*aside, fanning nervously at R.*). Thet's Sue! Monopolizing all the men and all the conversation. But I'll settle her. (*crosses c., aloud to EDWARD*). Hev you seen Kate Berwyn, Mr. Kingsley?

EDW. I have not had that pleasure.

JANE (*with feigned ecstasy*). Such a *beutiful* young woman. A brown beauty, we call her, because of her soft eyes and hair. Bless me, you'll fall in love with her at sight.

SUE (*to EDWARD*). A much overrated young woman.

EDW. And unmarried, you say?

JANE. It's not because she lacks chances. Every gentleman for miles around Hadley has been after her.

SUE (*spitefully*). After her farm, you mean. And even that won't draw them. You'll notice 'em falling away after a couple weeks' visiting. (*with meaning*) Men won't marry a woman who can't name her own father.

EDW. (*aside*). They are rather sensitive in Hadley. I would forego the father with Berwyn Farm in the bargain.

JANE (*to SUE*). Kate sends 'em about their business, and you know it, Sue. But it doesn't look as if she would treat Mr. Dudley thet way.

SUE (*sharply*). What do you mean by that, Jane Holly?

JANE. What I say, Sue. I see Mr. Dudley stopping at Berwyn four and five times a day, and then Kate comes over here pretty often. I've watched 'em close, and it strikes me Kate is unusually sweet in his company. Dudley, of course, is friendly to all; but I've noticed he is extra attentive to Kate. Take my word that something will come of it, Sue.

EDW. (*aside*). Confound this Dudley, whoever he is.

SUE. Pooh, Jane Holly; Dudley Brant is old enough to be Kate's father.

EDW. (*suddenly startled, and turning to SUE*). Dudley who?

SUE (*surprised*). Dudley Brant.

EDW. (*with trepidation*). Dudley Brant? A tall, middle-aged man, with gray hair, and pleasant manners?

JANE. Thet is Mr. Dudley, sure enough.

EDW. That man lives here—in Hadley?

SUE. He owns this very farm.

EDW. (*crosses L. c., aside*). Dudley Brant! Of all damnable luck, mine is most damnable. (*aloud to SUE*.) I thought he was living in Philadelphia.

SUE. He was until three years ago. At the death of his mother he sold his business and came here.

EDW. (*aside*). What in the devil's name brought Dudley Brant to the place where Kate lives?

JANE (*looking off* L. 3 E.). Mr. Dudley be coming up the pike now.

EDW. (*aside, deep in thought*). How can I win Kate with Dudley here? And he in love with her, too? (*with determination*). But I'll do it: I'll win Kate and her farm also, though fifty Dudley Brants live in Hadley. (*aloud, abruptly*). Good afternoon, ladies. (*Exit quickly at c. off* R. 3 E.)

JANE. Sue, thet chap acted queer. (*both go up c., looking off* R. 3 E.)

SUE. He knows something about Dudley. Now what can it be?

JANE (*suddenly*). Sue! Suppose Mr. Dudley has done something awful. Suppose this Kingsley is a detective?

SUE (*witheringly*). Jane Holly; you always wus a fool, and always will be. Dudley Brant wouldn't hurt a mosquito.

(*Enter DUDLEY BRANT and DR. PEABODY, L. 3 E., through hedge at c.*)

DUD. Good afternoon, ladies, (*as JANE and SUE move toward* R.). Pray don't allow us to disturb you. Well, Peabody, what luck to-day? Any new patients?

DR. P. Not one, Dudley. (*SUE and JANE whisper together, eyeing DUDLEY.*)

DUD. (*sympathetically*). Ah, too bad. Positively, I must become ill and let you practice on me. Well, well, better luck for to-morrow.

SUE. Mr. Dudley.

DUD. Well, Miss Perkins.

SUE (*watching to see the effect of her words*). Mr. Dudley; a young man was jest here—a young man named Kingsley.

DUD. (*with sudden severity*). Kingsley! What did he want?

SUE. He didn't seem to want anything but was surprised when he learned you lived here.

DUD. I imagine so. Don't trouble about him, Miss Perkins; he will not remain long in Hadley.

SUE (*rather disappointed*). Are you not afraid of him, Dudley?

DUD. (*smiling*). Afraid of him? Well, no. (*turning to* DR. P., *aside*). This Kingsley is that rascally secretary who appropriated my money four years ago.

DR. P. And you never prosecuted him?

DUD. Prosecuted him? Why no. (*apologetically*). You

see, Doctor, I knew his mother—a good woman, and a warm friend of mine. Her hopes were all in that boy, and to learn of his dishonesty would have killed her. However, I dismissed the rascal without a recommendation, you may be sure of that.

DR. P. (*amazed*). But, great heavens, Dudley; how much did he steal?

DUD. Only a hundred or two. I admit I *was* incensed after trusting him so implicitly. However, I recovered half the money, and to that fact I attribute my leniency. At the same time, I gave the scamp a sound thrashing—think of me thrashing anyone, Peabody—believing it well to impress him with a full sense of his misdemeanor. Now let us change the subject, Peabody.

DR. P. But one moment, Dudley. Don't you know you are placing the community at this fellow's mercy?

DUD. Yes, I have thought of that; but what was I to do? Send a man to prison for a trivial offense and you'll ruin him—ruin him body and soul, sir. Do you suppose I could stand before my Creator and say I have ruined a man? Why, I should be a criminal myself. Now I admit my feelings might have been stronger had I been a poor man. But I am a rich man—or comparatively so—and the fellow hurt himself more than he hurt me. I considered that point. But I gave him the thrashing, nevertheless, with a few moral remarks at the time. I trust he will benefit by both.

DR. P. Well, Dudley, it is your affair, and you are a man in a million to take such a view of it. I stopped over to see Polly.

DUD. Well, Doctor, I have no objections—and I don't think Polly has any. You know where to find her?

DR. P. I'll find her. (*crosses, ascends piazza and exits in house R. 2 E.*)

DUD. (*to SUE and JANE*). Ladies, there goes a deserving young man. The next time you are ailing, I'd advise you to call in Dr. Peabody.

SUE. Horrors! A young doctor!

JANE. I might hev him in for a toothache.

DUD. Take my word for it, you'll find him satisfactory.

JANE. I'd never hev it said I called in a young doctor. People are so apt to talk scandal. (*DUDLEY crosses L. in disgust*).

SUE. Come, Jane, I must look after Polly. I never trust young women alone with young men—particularly with doctors. (*crosses to DUD.; sentimentally*). Dudley, I have faith in you if I haven't in Dr. Peabody. I'll call him in when I'm ailing.

But remember, Dudley; should anything happen, the blame rests on you.

DUD. (*shaking SUE's hand*). Thank you, thank you, Miss Perkins. I am sure you have a kind heart. You'll never regret trying the doctor.

SUE (*aside to JANE*). You hear that, Jane? He said I had a kind heart. He's a lovely man—my ideal of a man. I think I'll remain, Jane Holly; Polly or no Polly. (*exit SUE and JANE in house at R.*)

DUD. (*alone*). Dear, dear, I shall wear myself out scaring up a practice for Peabody. Poor fellow; he is happy now, though—with Polly.

SUE (*calling off R. 3 E*). Dudleigh-h-h-h-h!

DUD. Now why didn't Miss Perkins say what she had to say when out here?

SUE (*calling*). Dudleigh-h-h-h-h! Do you hear-r-r?

DUD. I wish that good woman would refrain from using my Christian name. I am sure I never encouraged it.

SUE (*calling*). Dudleigh-h-h-h. Can you come-e-e-e?

DUD. (*annoyed*). When she calls in that manner the report spreads that we are on very familiar terms. Now, I am a mild-mannered man, but—

SUE (*calling*). Dudleigh-h-h-h. Please-e-e come.

DUD. (*impatiently*). Out of charity, I'll respond. She will crack her wind-pipe if I don't. (*exit C. off R. 3 E.*)

(*Enter DR. PEABODY and POLLY BRINTON from house at R.*)

POLLY (*disconsolately*). Not a single, solitary new patient, Dr. Peabody?

DR. P. Not one, Polly.

POLLY. Oh dear; what will we ever do if you don't get any patients?

DR. P. Go on loving each other as much as ever, Polly. If prospects don't change, I must go to the city. I can't stand this much longer.

POLLY. Oh, no-no-no; I *don't* want you to go to the city.

DR. P. Why not? I shall come back for my Polly.

POLLY. There are so many temptations in the city, Dr. Peabody.

DR. P. (*in grieved tone*). Why, Polly! You don't suppose I'm so weak as all that?

POLLY. There are so many girls in the city—girls are awful temptations.

DR. P. (*relieved*). Ho-ho. I see.

POLLY. Girls ever so much smarter and prettier than I am. No, I could never allow you to go to the city, Dr. Peabody.

DR. P. (*taking her in his arms*). There, Polly—never fear on that score. There may be prettier girls in the world, but I have no eye for them after seeing and knowing my Polly. But I'm in no hurry to leave, for who knows what might happen to Polly? Somebody might marry her?

POLLY (*looking up at him*). Only one somebody can do that.

DR. P. (*kissing her*). Polly! Well, I must be going now. That poor fellow who crushed his foot is in a rather bad way.

POLLY. Can the man pay you anything.

DR. P. Not a cent. He is poorer than I. Just think—a wife and four children to support during his illness.

POLLY (*sighing*). Oh, dear.

DR. P. Don't lose courage, Polly. Remember, we always have one thing to console us.

POLLY (*disconsolately*). What is that, Dr. Peabody?

DR. P. That we love one another. That helps me tremendously, Polly. (*goes up c.*)

POLLY (*drearily*). Yes, Dr. Peabody.

DR. P. (*at c. back*). It is some help to you; is it not, Polly?

POLLY (*running up to him*). Oh, yes, yes—it is all I have in the world. (*as he holds her*). I'm so happy now.

DR. P. (*kissing her*). So am I. Good bye, Polly. (*exit L. 3 E.*)

POLLY (*waving handkerchief after him*). Good bye! (*coming down; pensively*). Oh dear! If Dr. Peabody only had a practice.

(*Enter DUDLEY C. from R. 3 E.*)

DUD. Polly, Polly—where is the girl? Positively she needs a scolding.

POLLY. Here I am. Don't scold me, Mr. Dudley. I was only talking to Dr. Peabody.

DUD. (*pointing off R. 3 E.*). Do you see that, Polly?

POLLY (*in consternation*). The chickens. I forgot to feed them.

DUD. All waiting to be fed. (*looks at watch*). Their afternoon meal is twenty-six minutes late.

POLLY (*about to exit*). I'll give them double share for their waiting. (*pauses as DUDLEY comes down stage*). Oh, Mr. Dudley!

DUD. (*turning*). Well, Polly?

POLLY. Do you think Dr. Peabody *ever will* have a practice?

DUD. I sincerely hope so.

POLLY. It is an awful thing to be young and to have men ahead of you whom everybody believes in and patronizes. Oh, dear! I wish Dr. Peabody was fifty years old

DUD. No you don't, Polly.

POLLY. No, of course not. I don't mean so old as that, (*wistfully*). Do you think he will have to wait till he's fifty to get his practice, Mr. Dudley?

DUD. And his Polly? No, I do not. Dr. Peabody is an energetic young fellow and he will compel this community to recognize his merits.

POLLY. I wish something would turn up to help him. Now if we would all get the fever!

DUD. (*smiling mischievously*). Or the measles!

POLLY. Or the whooping cough!

DUD. Or the chicken pox!

POLLY. There! I know I'm silly. (*sighs*) Oh, dear, I'm off now to feed those poor chickies. (*exit R. 3 E., slowly.*)

DUD. Poor little Polly. Waiting for a young country doctor is a test for any woman's love.

(*Enter KATE BERWYN at L. 3 E., book in hand; pauses at c. B., looking off L.*)

KATE. Good afternoon, Mr. Dudley. (*leans one hand against hedge*).

DUD. (*turning quickly*). Why, is it Kate? As pretty and fresh as a June rose. (*KATE smiles and looks off L. 3 E. Goes up to her*). Now what is so attractive in the direction of Berwyn?

KATE (*turning toward DUDLEY, then looking off L.*). Berwyn itself; is it not beautiful?

DUD. (*gallantly*). Berwyn much resembles its owner. It is charming.

KATE (*smiling*). I never knew my good neighbor was a flatterer.

DUD. (*simply*). I am speaking the truth, Katharine—nothing more.

KATE (*gazing off L. 3 E.*). I never weary of gazing on my old home. How the trees of the orchard cluster about it; how prettily the roof peeps above them; even the dusty turnpike and the rickety bridge in the hollow have their charm. How pretty the grove and meadow on the hill yonder. We have watched many sunsets from that hill, Dudley.

DUD. (*soberly*). I shall never forget those sunsets, Kate. Yes, I believe you love Berwyn above all things.

KATE (*turning*). That would be a strange love for a woman, Dudley. (*sincerely*). But the place has a hold upon my heart. God grant I may never have to leave it.

DUD. (*questioningly*). Leave, Katharine?

KATE. They must have told you the story. If a certain man is living, Berwyn is his, when he comes to claim it.

DUD. I heard the gossip, but did not believe it. (*sympathizingly*). Poor Kate!

KATE. Yes; poor indeed, if it comes to that—and with scarcely a home to shelter me. (*with feeling*). You know my history, Dudley Brant. I am not Mrs. Berwyn's child; the name does not belong to me. I—

DUD. (*raising his hand*). Hush, Kate; you give yourself pain.

KATE. (*earnestly confronting him*). Dudley Brant, can you give your friendship to such a woman?

DUD. (*expostulating*). Kate! What a foolish question.

KATE. But the story is true, Dudley—every word of it.

DUD. (*taking her hand and patting it gently*). Katharine, I am growing old, and with age I become more exacting. I must insist upon your friendship to cheer my declining years. Will you give it me, little woman?

KATE. (*removing her hand and smiling sadly*). There are not many men like you, Dudley.

DUD. Well, I hope not, Katharine; I sincerely hope not. A useless old fellow I am becoming. One who has frittered away a lifetime without accomplishing anything of value. I fear I have wasted my talents, Kate. Alas, how many of us are wasting those talents.

KATE (*cheerfully*). I have often wondered why you never married.

DUD. I have sometimes wondered at that myself, Kate.

KATE. You are still young?

DUD. I am forty-five, Katharine.

KATE. And own one of the largest farms in Hadley. It seems strange that a man of your education should shut himself in this great house with little or no companionship. You see, our conversation has broken into a personal channel. I'll improve the opportunity and learn something about my good neighbor.

DUD. I am not shut in, Kate. I ride constantly; I have my birds, my books and my flowers, with which to study and amuse myself. Nor do I lack companions with Miss Perkins and Polly.

KATE. But when Polly marries the Doctor?

DUD. Yes, I have thought of that. However, let us not borrow trouble. The Doctor is not in a position to marry.

KATE. But he will be, some day.

DUD. I sincerely hope so—for Polly's sake and for his own.

KATE. Then you will *have* to marry. You cannot keep house alone.

DUD. (*gaily*). Whom shall I marry, Kate? Miss Perkins,

Miss Holly, or Tilly Emmons? No, I think Caleb would be after me if I asked the hand of the latter.

KATE. I shall look about for an eligible young lady.

DUD. (*smiling*). Thank you, Katharine. So you are going to turn match-maker on my account? But don't have her too young. Remember, I am becoming rather foggyish.

KATE. I see no symptoms of it.

DUD. I thank you again. But seriously, (*approaching her*) if I thought of marriage again, there is but one woman to my fancy.

KATE (*eagerly*). Do I know her?

DUD. (*looking into her eyes*). You know her quite intimately, Katharine.

KATE (*dropping eyes, rising and crossing R.*). What a foolish conversation. (*abruptly*). I return your book.

DUD. (*taking book and glancing at title*). Ah, you selected this—a favorite of mine. And what think you of the heroine?

KATE (*earnestly*). She was a noble woman; my ideal for a woman. She was faithful to the man she loved in her youth; faithful until death.

DUD. So that is your ideal of true womanhood?

KATE. Yes.

DUD. But suppose the man proved unworthy? Suppose the woman sacrifices the pleasures that might still be hers for the vague, idealistic faith in one who has perhaps forgotten her long ago; suppose—

KATE (*interrupting, with some feeling*). No more, Dudley; faith admits of no suppositions.

DUD. You asked me why I never married. A hundred times have I wondered the same about you.

KATE (*smiling sadly*). Why I never married? Surely my position at Berwyn does not warrant. For the past five years I have lived on property I cannot truthfully call my own. Were the owner to return I should be an outcast.

DUD. You refer to this son of Mrs. Berwyn?

KATE. Yes; we believe he died in Arizona—at least we heard news to that effect. Mrs. Berwyn was unfortunate with her children. There was a daughter, also, who gave her pain and trouble, and who died. After that the poor woman clung to me. Indeed my own mother could scarcely have loved me more.

DUD. At her death she willed Berwyn to you?

KATE. Yes—not having children nor other relations. Her husband was a foreigner; his son, very like him, being swarthy as an Italian and wild and weak, alternately.

DUD. That was the one who went West?

KATE. Yes; if he returns, the will gives me the alternative of marrying him and receiving a half interest in Berwyn; or of retiring to the little homestead near Reading, which in that case, should be mine. You see, Dudley, my position is uncertain. Her son may be alive and may return to-morrow. While in such uncertainty, it would be foolish to think of marriage.

DUD. Not at all, if you will pardon me. All the better reason for securing a home which is unquestionably your own. No, Kate, there is something beneath it—some little romance of the past. (KATE turns away, going slowly up c.) I would not pry into it for worlds. (going up to her anxiously). You are not hurt by my speech, Kate?

KATE (absently, leaning head against hand). Not hurt—no, Dudley. (facing him with a smile). Do you know, I have an idea that neither you nor I will marry. We will grow old, living side by side on our farms. You'll come to see me every day, as you do now; will you not?

DUD. I promise to come. But remember, Katharine, I am twenty years your senior in the matter of age; and an older man at forty-five than most. I will probably break down early.

KATE. Nonsense. Do you know, sir; I was watching you yesterday. You were leaping the meadow wall with the boys and I was surprised at your agility. I—

SUE (calling without, R. 3 E.). Dudleigh-h-h-h!

DUD. (grimly, aside). That is the way all my delightful talks are interrupted.

SUE (without). Dudleigh-h-h-h-h. That hen of yours is off her eggs—and I can't spend my time fooling with your crazy chickens. Do you hear-r-r-r?

DUD. (aside). Miss Perkins only thinks of that hen during my conversations with Kate. (to KATE). You will excuse me for a few minutes?

KATE. Certainly. May I have another book?

DUD. What a question! The whole library is at your disposal. (exit c. off R. 3 E.).

KATE (coming down R. c.; with feeling). A romance of the past! Dudley guessed my secret. But will the romance have an ending? Why have I not heard from Edward? He promised to come and I have waited—waited so long. (looking toward house). I admire Dudley; he is a good, a noble man. I admire him almost as much as I love Edward. (with emotion). Edward—my handsome lover—who has forgotten me! (sinks into chair beside table R. c. allowing head to fall forward on arms.)

(Enter WESTERN BILLY at c. from R. 3 E. His face lights up as he sees KATE; hesitates by hedge, then comes down c. rather nervously.)

BILLY (*aside*). Hullo—the gal's crying. (to KATE, in softened voice). Can I do anything for you, Miss? Ef anybody hez been hurtin' your feelings, Kate Berwyn, jest give *their* name to me, and they won't hurt nothin' else this side o' Kingdom Cum.

KATE (*rising, a trifle startled, and passing handkerchief quickly across eyes. Aside*). What a strange looking man. (*aloud*). Who are you?

BILLY. I'm Western Billy, Miss Kate Berwyn—Western Billy, of Arizona. Who made yer cry, Kate? The old feller—old Brant? Tell me. I'm on yer side, gal, and he won't hurt you agin in a hurry.

KATE. No one hurt my feelings. Do you wish to see Mr. Brant?

BILLY. No, I want to see you, gal. I've been wanting to see yer alone for three days now. I've got something to say to yer, Kate.

KATE (*surprised*). To say to me. Well?

BILLY. Kate, you're a lucky gal. You own Berwyn farm thar, with all its orchards and cattle and farm land. Do you remember how you first came thar? You wuz a little baby and you didn't own anything and had no right to anything. Do you remember that, Kate?

KATE (*looking closely at BILLY*). You seem to know me. Who are you?

BILLY. Never mind thet, gal; do you remember about your coming to Berwyn? Ain't it true?

KATE. It is true. (*sits at R. looking keenly at BILLY.*)

BILLY. And then you remember old Mother Berwyn, who was so good to you. She took you in as one of her children, and sent you to school with 'em. They never had nothin' you didn't hev. She treated you like her own children, didn't she, Kate?

KATE. Yes—yes—why do you recall all this?

BILLY. Because I want you to realize what you owe to her. I want yer to think of Mother Berwyn and agree to something which would be her wish ef she were living here now.

KATE. Well?

BILLY. Kate—you knew her children. You knew her son and what a wild young devil he turned out to be.

KATE. I knew him too well. He broke his mother's heart by his cowardly action in leaving her.

BILLY. Don't jedge him that way—jedge him like his mother would. Don't you think his mother would like to see him agin? (*wistfully*). Wouldn't you like ter see him agin, Kate?

KATE (*coldly*). No. I never wish to see William Berwyn again.

BILLY (*hastily*). Don't say thet, thet way—you're not thinkin' as his mother would now.

KATE. I am not his mother. I cannot think of him as she would.

BILLY. But try to think her way; she'd pity and feel sorry fer him, ef she knew he came back and had repented.

KATE. I think of his mother waiting and praying for his return. I think of her looking eagerly for each mail, and see her sink back into her chair when it brought no news of her son. I can hear her crying "No word, no word, Katie—my boy is dead, or he would surely write to his poor old mother." No, I have no sympathy for William Berwyn. He is dead—

BILLY (*interrupting*). No—Kate, he is not dead.

KATE (*excitedly*). Not dead—not dead—where is he?

BILLY. He is here, gal. (*hanging head*)—I am he. (*pause*, KATE *shrinks from him.*)

KATE (*slowly*). You—William Berwyn?

BILLY. Yes, (*hastily and imploringly*). Don't look at me thet way. Don't look at me as though you hated me, gal. I don't want you to hate me, because—because—

KATE (*aside*). I knew it would come—I knew it would come! (*aloud*). No, I do not hate you—I pity you. Pity is more contemptible than hatred. What brought you to Hadley?

BILLY. I thought I would like to see the old place. (*humbly*) I didn't know my mother was dead. I came back and found Berwyn hed a new owner. I don't want the farm, Kate. I only don't want you to hate me. (*pause*). Well, Kate—(*pause*). Kate, gal; tell me thet you don't hate me. Please tell me thet, Kate.

KATE (*slowly*). The farm—Berwyn—is mine no longer.

BILLY. Yes it is, Kate.

KATE. No—it is yours; the will—

BILLY (*interrupting*). I've seen the will, gal—I don't deserve a bit of it. You wuz the only decent child my mother ever had. You staid with her; you comforted her; the farm's yours and you deserve it. You're the best and sweetest gal in the world, and no one feels it more than I. (KATE *sits leaning with chin against hand at table R. C. With rough tenderness*). Kate, Kate—I've been watching yer for the past three days, and loving yer; yes,

loving yer, gal; I've been listenin' to all the things they've been telling me. How well you kept the farm over thar; how you wus the best business woman in Hadley, and the first and prettiest lady in the place before all of them. I knew the last part from the moment I laid eyes on yer agin. Kate, dear, you say you want to give up the farm; it's good and generous of you to do thet. But you can't go away; you can't leave old Berwyn after living thar all your life. Kate, gal, will you marry me, and then we'll both live thar, and own the farm together as we both should and oughter.

KATE. Marry you?

BILLY. Yes, me. I know I'm a hard lot. I know I'm not good enough fer you and never could be. But I know ef you married me it would give a turn to my life, I know thet I'd settle down inter a sober, hard-working man as my mother would hev liked to see me. I could do thet, Kate, ef I had you ter help me. Won't you, Kate, gal; won't yer marry me and help me ter be a decent man?

KATE (*rising and crossing L., coldly*). I cannot help you in the way you wish. The farm is yours; you shall have it.

BILLY (*passionately*). I don't want the farm, gal; I want ter try a new life; I want you, Kate.

KATE. No—William Berwyn; you will take the old farm and marry some good girl who would do more for you than I ever could.

BILLY (*madly*). I won't—I won't change: I won't try ter change ef you won't help me. Why can't you, Kate? You're not in love with any one else. By God, if you are—

KATE (*facing him*). Well?

BILLY. No—no—I don't mean to threaten yer, gal. I was thinking of him. Why can't yer marry me—tell me, gal; tell me?

KATE. Because, William Berwyn, in the first place I could not accept you for my husband, and in the second I am engaged to be married already.

BILLY (*bangs fist on table*). Who to?

KATE (*quietly*). I will not tell you.

BILLY (*furiously*). I'll find him out, Kate. I give you fair warning; I'll kill thet man!

KATE (*smiles sadly*). You cannot kill him.

BILLY. I can't, eh? It's safer to bet on thet with someone else besides Western Billy. I know who you're in love with,—Dudley Brant!

KATE (*quickly*). No.

BILLY (*in rage*). Yer don't fool me, gal—I've seen yer

together. I've got nothing agin Dudley Brant, but let him be careful when coming between you and me.

KATE. The man I referred to does not live in Hadley. Dudley Brant and I are friends—excellent friends, and nothing more. Be careful how you threaten him.

BILLY (*sharply*). It's not Dudley Brant?

KATE. No.

BILLY. All right, gal; yer may be speaking the truth and yer may be lyin'. I'll keep an eye on yer both. (*with sudden rage*) You're a fool not to marry me. (*with sudden repentance and humility*) Forgive me, gal; I don't want ter threaten yer, but I love yer, Kate, and I won't have another ahead of me.

(*Enter EDWARD L. 3 E. unobserved by KATE and BILLY. Leans against gate at c. twirling cane nonchalantly. BILLY crosses to L. 3 E.*) So keep him away from me, gal; keep him away from me, ef yer don't want trouble fer him and trouble fer all of us. (*exit L. 1 E. EDWARD gazes calmly after him.*)

KATE (*agitated*). He has come at last. I knew it; I have felt it all these years. I must leave the farm; leave Berwyn for him. For that man who deserted his home, who broke his mother's heart; who killed her. Why does he come back now? He did not want the farm, or he would have remained at home. He is unworthy of it. Why didn't he stay out there in Arizona? Why didn't he die out there? Marry him! Not for a thousand Berwyns. I hate him—I despise him! He was cruel and cowardly as a boy, and used to hurt me when we played together. He is cruel and cowardly yet; he must be—men cannot change their natures. (*EDWARD comes slowly down c. KATE at R. c. not seeing him*). He threatened Dudley. He dared to threaten Dudley! He threatened Edward—(*turns, and on beholding EDWARD, starts back, with quick ejaculation*). Edward! Edward Kingsley! (*pause; then with anxious earnestness*). Why have you come to Hadley?

EDW. I came for you, Kate.

KATE (*looking at him doubtfully*). After all these years?

EDW. (*extending his arms*). After all these years.

KATE (*pause, as she holds back doubtfully. Then her face lighting radiantly with happiness*). My Edward—at last! (*glides forward with eyes fixed lovingly on him until his arms close about her.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

BERWYN.—*Neatly furnished interior of old country homestead. Doors at C., R. and L. Window at L. C.; small secretary with writing materials and diary thereon at L. 1 E.*
 (KATE standing in doorway C. looking R.; ANNE at L. C. Clock on mantel at L. strikes nine as curtain rises.)

ANNE. Nine o'clock! Humph!

KATE (*in doorway*). Well, Anne?

ANNE. 'Pears as if your fine city chap don't get up very early.

KATE. Perhaps he is not accustomed to it.

ANNE (*sharply*). Well, human nature ought to make him accustomed on a morning like this; 'specially after not seeing you for seven years. Lord, if I was as much in love as he says *he* is, I'd be mooning 'round Berwyn before daylight.

KATE (*quietly*). He will come.

ANNE (*grumbling*). Oh, I dare say! That's the way with those city chaps; all born lazy I say. Now look at this one, who lives in white shirts and high collars, and carries a cane. (*scornfully*) A cane! What good is a man who carries a cane? Wonder if he knows what work is? He don't look it.

KATE. I'm sorry you don't like him, Anne.

ANNE (*bluntly*). Well, I don't fancy him, that's a fact. Too smooth and good-looking for my taste. Besides, there's a something in his face I don't trust.

KATE. You admit he is handsome.

ANNE (*shortly*). I've seen better.

KATE (*earnestly*). I never have. Seven years ago, I thought him as handsome as a young man could be. I was mistaken. He has much improved since.

ANNE. Deliver me from handsome men; they're conceited and not worth much. Besides, women spoil 'em, if they don't spoil themselves. Now, there was my Silas—the ugliest man in Hadley, and the best husband, too. But he had a wife who kept him steady.

KATE. Edward waited for me through seven years. How many men would do that?

ANNE. Humph! Did he explain his silence during that time?

KATE. Yes; he sent me five letters, all of which were returned.

ANNE (*incredulously*). Returned?

KATE. We know how that happened, Anne. After her daughter's trouble, Mrs. Berwyn hated all men from the cities. You remember how she opposed my engagement?

ANNE. But she never opened your letters.

KATE. She forbade me seeing or hearing from Edward. Is it not likely that she returned any letters he sent me?

ANNE (*looking at KATE doubtfully*). Without telling you of it?

KATE. I fear it is so, Anne.

ANNE (*bluntly*). Well, I don't believe it. Mother Berwyn wouldn't deceive a human critter—much less you, whom she doted on.

KATE. What would you have me believe? Edward would not lie to me.

ANNE (*doggedly*). I'm not so sure about that.

KATE (*facing ANNE with indignant eyes*). Anne!

ANNE. I don't like his face, dearie. I've seen such faces before, and their owners were more bad than good.

KATE (*with an outburst of indignation*). You are insulting my Edward; you are hurting me when you say that. (*turns away, going up c.*)

ANNE (*approaching KATE with relenting voice and manner*). There, dearie, I didn't mean to hurt you. I'm a harsh old woman that's what I am; and this sharp tongue of mine has a habit of saying what it means and saying it quickly. I didn't mean to hurt you, Kate. (*pause.*)

KATE (*turning and laying hand on ANNE's arm*). We will not quarrel, Anne. But don't speak against Edward. I love him too dearly to hear it.

ANNE (*affectionately*). I won't Katie; I won't. He may be all you think him—I hope so. He is good looking, and has some fine manners; but I don't like his—(*interrupting herself*). There—I won't say another word, not another word, Katie. (*pausing at door, R. 2. E.*) But I can't help wishing he never came near here. (*exit ANNE R. 2 E.* KATE comes thoughtfully down L.; stops with her hand on chair before secretary at L. 2 E. Thoughtfully picks up diary that lies on desk.)

KATE. My diary. I forgot to write in it last night. Last night I forgot everything except my Edward. (*sits at secretary and writes in diary. Pause.*)

(*Enter EDWARD at c. He hesitates in doorway regarding her; then comes down L. c. and stands leaning against back of KATE's chair.*)

EDW. Well?

KATE (*rising with joyous little exclamation*). Edward!

EDW. (*folding her in his arms fondly*). Kate!

KATE (*looking up into his face*). The hours have been so long.

EDW. Since we parted?

KATE. Yes.

EDW. They were but nine.

KATE (*fondly*). But nine too many for me.

EDW. (*indicating diary*). What have you there?

KATE. My diary. I usually write in it at night, but last night—well, you know I had no mind for diaries last night. (*takes up book and hands it to EDWARD*). See what I entered for yesterday. (*leans against his arm as he reads*.)

EDW. (*reading*). "The most beautiful day in all the year, for Edward has come. I have waited for him seven long years." (*laying book on secretary and passing arm around Kate*). You are happy, Kate?

KATE. The happiest woman in the world.

EDW. (*crosses R., aside*). I feel like a beast deceiving her. (*aloud*). You warned me of your guardian's prejudice. When my letters were returned I was disappointed, but not surprised. Then I settled down to work for the little woman who was waiting for me in Hadley. She told me to come when I could marry her. I am here, Kate.

KATE (*lovingly*). My Edward! Another man would have forgotten me.

EDW. You did not forget me, Kate?

KATE (*firmly*). Never! The waiting was harder for me, for women love as men cannot. I begged permission to write to you. I begged so earnestly; but my guardian was inexorable, and I could not deceive her. And so there was nothing to do but wait and wait; and day and month and year went by without your coming. They were long, long years to me.

EDW. (*crosses to her*). Do you remember the last night we were together? That night in the city, seven years ago?

KATE. I shall never forget that night.

EDWARD. Only six weeks had I known you, yet we parted lovers. You cried at that parting, Kate.

KATE. I have cried since, when month and year passed without your coming. We were on the lawn that night, with the stars shining above, and the lights of the city all around us. You remember we sat listening to the music which poured out through the tall open window. That night we were happy and sad; happy with each other; sad at the thought of separation which must come on the morrow.

EDW. That night I slipped this ring on your finger (*fingering ring on her left hand, sincerely*). That night I resolved to work hard to win name and position.

KATE (*lovingly*). And I promised to wait while you worked. You remember your grief, your sorrow, when I said we must wait, years, perhaps, without seeing or hearing from each other? You remember your words at our parting—"Kate, Kate—wait for me, little girl. I will come." I have never forgotten those words. Good, honest gentlemen have offered me their homes and their hearts, but I never considered their offers. I was bound to one man—one man, whom I knew was winning a home for himself and for me in that far distant city.

EDW. (*crosses c. with feeling*). Kate, I'm not the man you knew then. That night I was honest. My love was sincere. (*bitterly*). I'm an older man now, and one whom the world has conquered.

KATE (*softly*). Do you love me?

EDW. (*pressing her to him*). I do that, little girl, I do that!

KATE. That is all I require. You are young; you have made mistakes, doubtless; but life is before you in which to correct them.

EDW. (*with sincerity*). My past life was not as it should be. Will you help me, little Kate, to become a good man?

KATE (*softly*). Is it not woman's province to encourage the man whom she loves. I rejoice that you need me.

EDW. (*looking at her keenly*). Suppose a friend should tell you your lover was not honest?

KATE (*promptly*). I would not believe him.

EDW. (*eagerly*). You would not believe it? Think, Kate; if your best friend should make that accusation?

KATE (*smiling*). How foolish a question! My lover comes before all friends.

EDW. (*pacing stage at R. restlessly. Stops suddenly*). Kate, I have an enemy in Hadley.

KATE (*surprised*). In Hadley?

EDW. A man who would be quite relentless. Who will destroy your love for me, if that lies in his power.

KATE (*quickly*). Who is this man! I shall hate him!

EDW. This man holds me in his power. He can drive me from Hadley; he can drive me from you, Kate. (*walks thoughtfully up to window, L. C.*)

KATE (*quickly*). He cannot do that. Who is this man? Let me know him.

EDW. His name is—(*glances through window, then turning*

quickly to KATE)—He is coming up the path at this moment. *(comes nervously down L. C. standing with back to C. door.)*

KATE *(looking at EDWARD strangely)*. Why, Edward!

EDW. *(nervously)*. Wait, and see.

(Enter DUDLEY BRANT in doorway at C.)

KATE. *(with exclamation of surprise)*. Dudley Brant!

DUD. Good morning, Katharine. Why such emphasis on my name?

KATE *(looking strangely at DUDLEY, then crossing to EDWARD)*. Edward, are you sure. Is this the man?

EDW. *(in low voice, with face turned from DUDLEY)*. Yes.

DUD. *(seeing EDWARD for first time. To KATE)*. I beg your pardon. Perhaps I intrude? *(makes move to exit at C.)*

KATE *(motioning to DUDLEY)*. Wait. *(appealingly to EDWARD)* Edward! *(EDWARD still standing with back turned to DUDLEY, KATE ashamed of his weakness faces DUDLEY firmly:)* Mr. Brant, I wish to make you acquainted with Mr. Kingsley—*(DUDLEY steps back with surprise)* the gentleman I am going to marry. *(pause. DUDLEY standing straight and somewhat stiffly, only his fingers working nervously)*.

DUD. *(coming down R. C., speaking firmly)*. No, Kate, you shall not marry that man. *(pause.)*

KATE *(speaking with low, but earnest vehemence)*. By what authority do you make that statement? Are you my guardian, or are you his?

DUD. *(quietly, yet firmly)*. I am your friend, Katharine. If friendship possesses any authority, I shall use it to protect you.

KATE. Friendship? What is the authority of friendship to that of love?

DUD. *(as though disbelieving his ears)*. Do you love Edward Kingsley?

KATE *(with forced calmness)*. I have said I will marry him. Surely I'll marry no man I do not love.

DUD. *(sternly)*. Where and how did this—this fellow make your acquaintance?

KATE. Again I ask by what authority you question me?

DUD. *(recovering himself)*. True—true; I was wrong. I crave your pardon. *(turning sternly toward EDWARD)* My questions are for him to answer.

KATE *(quickly stepping between DUDLEY and EDWARD)*. He has told me of the advantage you hold over him.

DUD. Did he tell you what gave me that advantage? *(drily, as KATE remains silent)* I thought not. Kate, this man is a rascal.

KATE *(indignantly)*. He is a gentleman—as honorable a gentleman as I have known.

DUD. (*quietly*). Pardon me if I differ with that opinion.

KATE (*keenly*). Too honorable to slander a man who cannot resist.

DUD. (*bowing his head sadly*). Kate! Kate! (*pause*). Have I been an unworthy friend these past three years?

KATE (*in softened voice*). No.

DUD. Think, Katharine. Have I ever spoken or counselled against your interests?

KATE. I never found fault with your friendship until this moment.

DUD. Nor would you find fault with it now, if you knew my reasons. I know this man as you cannot.

KATE (*firmly*). I know him. I trust him; I love him.

DUD. No, Kate; to know is to distrust him. I have lived with him; I have trusted him, and he betrayed that trust. I ask whether you or I should be the better judge.

KATE. I am the best judge of the man I would marry. I knew him years before I knew you, Dudley Brant.

DUD. If he was a good man then, he has changed in those years. Has he confessed to his weaknesses?

KATE. I have not asked that confession.

DUD. You are determined to marry him.

KATE. I am determined to marry him.

DUD. Without knowing the man?

KATE. I know him; I love him—that is my answer.

DUD. Very good; I must now deal with him. (*to EDWARD*) Edward Kingsley, I desire a few minutes' conversation. (*KATE looks at EDWARD who stands looking fixedly in front of him*). If you refuse, you can imagine the consequences. (*EDWARD opens and clasps his hands convulsively*).

KATE (*turning angrily on DUDLEY*). If you come to threaten my guest, I shall request you to leave my house.

DUD. (*turning and taking hat from table beside c. door*). Your pardon for this intrusion. (*bows head*) I shall disturb you no longer with my presence. (*raising head and speaking significantly at EDWARD*). However, Mr. Kingsley will accompany me.

KATE (*with temper*). Mr. Kingsley will not.

DUD. (*quietly to KATE*). Pardon me; but I think he will. (*to EDWARD*) Will you come?

EDW. (*aside*). Curse it! (*to KATE*) Kate, I must speak with him. Leave us.

KATE (*expostulating*). Edward!

EDW. (*nervously*). Yes—yes—I must. (*pause*).

KATE. Since you request it, I will leave you. (*crosses to EDWARD*). Don't keep Mr. Brant long, for I shall be waiting.

(*lifts her face towards his, expecting caress*). Won't you kiss me Edward? (EDWARD *hesitates; glances timidly at DUDLEY at c. and then kisses KATE coldly. KATE crosses to L. 1 E. to EDWARD*). Remember, I am waiting. (*exit L. 1 E.*)

DUD. Where did you meet Miss Berwyn?

EDW. (*sullenly*). In Philadelphia.

DUD. When?

EDW. Seven years ago.

DUD. So, so.—(*paces stage thoughtfully at R. with hands clasped behind him; stops suddenly, confronting EDWARD*). You understand, you cannot marry her? I should be a poor friend if I allowed Katharine to debase herself in that manner. (EDWARD *clenches fists convulsively*). Where have you been since last I saw you?

EDW. (*sullenly*). In Chicago. (*impetuously*)—I couldn't get a start there; my cursed luck was against me.

DUD. (*sternly*). Your cursed vices, you mean. Your propensity for cards, for horses, for women,—for everything unworthy of a gentleman. So when luck went against you, you thought of this pure little woman and her large farm in Hadley. You stole her love years ago—'tis not difficult for a handsome young rake to win the regard of a girl,—you now come to steal her property.

EDW. You wrong me there, Dudley Brant. I'm a bad lot, but I loved Kate when I met her. (*sullenly*) I love her now.

DUD. (*drily*). How faithful you have been to her.

EDW. (*doggedly*). No worse than other men, I suppose.

DUD. (*after pause, while looking at EDWARD attentively*). You say you love Kate?

EDW. Yes.

DUD. And wish to make her your wife?

EDW. I do.

DUD. In that case you have confessed everything. (*with touch of sarcasm*). She has forgiven your errors?

EDW. No.

DUD. I thought not.

EDW. There are some passages in a man's life which must remain sealed.

DUD. Only dishonest men are so fearful. Confess, Edward Kingsley, that you are mercenary in this, as you have been mercenary in all things. Confess that you came to Hadley—not for love of Kate, but for love of Kate's property. Ah, yes—it is a pretty place; is it not? It would yield you several thousands, and the love of this pure, trusting woman. With both you could amuse yourself for a time. (*solemnly*). But, young

man, there is a Providence above this universe which will occasionally protect the weak and withstand the strong. That Power frustrated your design when it led me to Hadley—I, Dudley Brant, the man you have most reason to fear. So you thought to add little Kate to your victims? You coward!

EDW. (*clenching fists and starting forward nervously*). Be careful!

DUD. (*standing calmly, with arms folded*). Lay hand on me and I'll throttle you. I came near doing so when your lips touched her cheek.

EDW. I'll pay back your money—every cursed cent.

DUD. With Miss Berwyn's property? No, I thank you. (*sternly*) Now, Edward Kingsley, you appreciate your danger. Five years ago you were my secretary, implicitly trusted by me. You rewarded that confidence by embezzling fifteen hundred dollars of my money, seven hundred of which I recovered. I spared you at the time for the sake of your mother. However, your crime remains, and at a word from me, the law seizes you for punishment. When I leave this house, it is to obtain a warrant for your arrest. That warrant will be served unless you leave Hadley within an hour; (*with emphasis*) leave Hadley *never* to return.

EDW. (*impetuously*). Is this right—is this fair! I love Kate Berwyn. I've been weak and foolish I admit, but I had temptations. Kate can cure me of that. Take her from me, and I'll go straight to the devil.

DUD. Only cowards and villians make such threats. However, between the two sacrifices I choose to save Kate, who is spotless.

EDW. We are rivals, Dudley Brant; we will recognize that. Let the woman be the prize with a fair field for both. You're a generous minded man,—all I ask is fair play.

DUD. I decline to enter the competition.

EDW. You refuse to give me a chance? You'll use this cowardly advantage?

DUD. For Kate's sake I will.

EDW. (*sneering*). For Kate's sake! For your own sake, you mean. With me out of the way, you think Kate will succumb to your wooing. Well, we'll see. Remember, she waited for me seven years.

DUD. We will not discuss that.

EDW. If you won't consider me, think of Kate.—She loves me. (DUDLEY *passes his hand thoughtfully across his forehead; then paces stage at R.* EDW. *approaches, speaking quickly*). She does. You saw how she left us just now. If you send me

away, you will give her pain; you will hurt a woman, Dudley Brant?

DUD. (*harshly*). She will forget that girlish infatuation.

EDW. She will *not* forget! Why has she waited all these years. Why resisted you and a score of your neighbors? Because she has met the man she loves, and because a woman, with her nature clings to that love through a life-time.

DUD. You lie, you cur! Were I to tell her one half your history, she would despise you.

EDW. Tell her all, and be damned. We will see if she loves me. (*crosses toward L. 1 E., where KATE made exit.*)

DUD. (*quickly, and raising finger warningly*). Stop!

EDW. (*pausing irresolutely*). Well?

DUD. (*quietly*). Do not call her. You are not to see Kate Berwyn again.

EDW. (*uneasily*). What do you mean?

DUD. (*sternly*). If you do so—or attempt to do so—you go to prison.

EDW. (*fiercely*). You will do this?

DUD. (*quietly*). On my word as a gentleman. (EDWARD *crosses to DUDLEY threateningly. DUDLEY faces him calmly.*)

EDW. Be careful, or I'll kill you.

DUD. (*calmly*). Now, sit there and write. (*points to KATE'S secretary at L.*)

EDW. Write?

DUD. Write your note, bidding farewell to Miss Berwyn. (*looking at watch*). You have ten minutes to catch the next train leaving Hadley. I will attend to your baggage. (EDWARD *remains at c., with fists clenched and eyes glaring. Then eyes become fixed as thought strikes him. Glances quickly toward DUDLEY who has turned away; then towards secretary. DUDLEY comes down.*) Now, write as I dictate.

EDW. (*roughly*). I will write my own note.

DUD. As you please, but you will submit it for my reading

EDW. No!

DUD. (*sternly*). Yes. (EDWARD *remains deep in thought, knitting brows craftily.*)

EDW. Very well. (*crosses L. and sits by secretary.*)

DUD. (*at c.*). Write that you are leaving Hadley never to return.

EDW. (*interrupting surlily*). I'll write my own note, I say. If you don't like it, destroy it.

DUD. (*quietly*). I shall. (*goes up to window at L. c., standing looking out with hands clasped behind him.*)

EDW. (*looking after DUDLEY with face expressive of hatred and*

triumph. Aside. Kate's diary. (*vehemently*). Good! (*writes rapidly on paper*). "My darling: This man believes I have left Hadley forever. That is impossible after seeing you again. If you love me meet me in the orchard beneath your window at nine this evening. If you will marry me immediately this man's power over me will cease." (*looking up from paper*) Yes, by Heaven, he'll not prosecute Kate's husband! (*writing*) "You alone in all this world can save me." (*folds note quickly, after glancing suspiciously toward DUDLEY*). This goes in the diary where she will find it to-night, if not sooner. (*opens diary, turns pages cautiously and inserts note. Then pushes back chair, tearing up sheet of blank paper noisily which he casts in waste basket. Rises from secretary.*)

DUD. (*turning*). Have you finished?

EDW. (*sullenly*). No.

DUD. Perhaps I'd better assist you?

EDW. Wait. (*throws himself in chair before secretary and writes rapidly. Rises and crosses c.*) It is finished.

DUD. (*coming down to secretary, takes up note and reads*) "My dear Miss Berwyn: I am leaving Hadley quite suddenly. Though you will never see me again, do not forget me. Good bye, Kate. Think of me sometimes when you write in that little diary." (*to EDWARD*) That last sentence is superfluous.

EDW. (*roughly*). Too sentimental, eh? Shall I 'change it?

DUD. No, let it remain. I will deliver the note myself.

EDW. (*harshly*). And tell her my history at the same time, I suppose?

DUD. I shall tell Katharine you are unworthy of her—nothing more. (*looking at watch*). Now you have four minutes to train time. Farewell, Edward Kingsley. I shall exact no promise from you to remain away from Hadley, as you well know the consequences should you return. I trust you will become an honest man.

EDW. (*laughing ironically*). Honest! What advice from the lips of a thief (*approaching DUDLEY fiercely*). You are a thief, Dudley Brant; you are stealing Kate from me. (*going up c.*) But never fear. My turn will come next. (*exit c.*)

DUD. (*goes slowly up c. and stands in doorway looking L., musingly*). I may have been stern, but the occasion demanded it. (*pause, while looking off L.*) He is nearing the station now; I can see him no longer for the trees. (*comes down*) In less than two minutes' time, Edward Kingsley will be leaving Hadley. (*looks toward L. 1 E. Then paces stage with hands clasped behind him. Stops suddenly*). Suppose he deceives me? Suppose he does not leave? (*goes quickly up c. taking up hat, but pauses in*

doorway). No; that is unlikely. He knows I am a man to keep my word. (*thoughtfully*) But I must be careful—I must be careful. (*comes down stage*). Poor Kate. (*sits in chair before secretary, looking toward door, L. 1 E.*) Will she suffer? Will she hate me for this morning's work? How difficult is one's duty at moments; how liable to misconstruction. (*rises, going up c. doorway, and looking L.; then comes slowly down L. G. and knocks gently at door, L. 1 E.*)

(*Enter KATE L. 1 E. sweeping past DUDLEY to c.*)

KATE (*glancing hastily around, then quickly, at DUD.*). Where is Edward?

DUD. (*quietly regarding her*). He is leaving Hadley.

KATE (*excitedly*). Leaving Hadley? How? When? (*quickly seizing hat, which she adjusts nervously*). He warned me you were his enemy, but you shall not drive him from me. (*goes hastily up to c. door.*)

DUD. Where are you going?

KATE. After him whom I love. (*noise of train stopping at station a short distance off L. B.*)

DUD. (*sadly*). You will not find him.

KATE (*in doorway*). I will. He was here a moment ago. He cannot depart so quickly.

DUD. (*holding up one finger*). Listen!

KATE (*shuddering*). The train!

DUD. That train is bearing him away from Hadley.

KATE (*dumbly*). Taking Edward from Hadley?

DUD. (*passing hand across face*). This note is for you, my poor Kate. (*KATE comes quickly down L. c., seizes note from DUDLEY's hand and opens it hurriedly.*)

KATE (*reading in frightened voice*). "I am leaving Hadley quite suddenly—" (*looks up at DUDLEY*) This is Edward's handwriting? (*DUDLEY bites his lip grimly; KATE looking at note*) What is this—what is this? (*reads*) "I am leaving Hadley quite suddenly. Though you will never see me again, do not forget me—" (*murmuring as she crosses slowly to table at R. c. with eyes fixed on letter*)—As though I could forget him! As though I could forget him! (*walks up against table, her eyes still fixed on letter; then suddenly falls in chair, her face hidden in arms on table, sobbing violently*).

DUD. (*crosses R. and laying his hand on the back of KATE's chair, looking down at her; then crosses L. once more. Sadly*) Am I the cause of this?

KATE (*rising hastily, leaving note on table; turns madly on DUDLEY, who regards her sadly*). That note is not Edward Kingsley's!

DUD. (*quietly*). I did not write it, Kate.

KATE. But you dictated while he wrote.

DUD. No, Katharine.

KATE. It was you who compelled him to write it?

DUD. (*nodding head*). Yes.

KATE. Why have you done this?

DUD. (*slowly*). Because this man is unworthy of you. If you knew him as I do, pure woman that you are, you would despise him.

KATE (*vehemently*). It is you, Dudley Brant, who have taken him from me. (*fiercely*). Bring him back—bring him back; or I shall hate you!

DUD. (*quietly*). He will not return, Katharine.

KATE (*pleadingly*). Dudley—Dudley—think how long I have waited! Seven years, seven long, long, years, Dudley. I have thought of him every day, every hour of that time. I have watched for him; I have prayed for him; Oh, I have prayed so earnestly for his coming. And now that he has come, you would take him from me. You are not hard hearted; you will not do that; I have lived for this man; I love him so dearly—so dearly. You will not destroy my happiness; you will not do that, Dudley—you will not do that! (*sinks in chair before DUDLEY, pressing her face in hands against back of chair.*)

DUD. (*stroking her hair and looking down at her*). My poor Kate—my poor Kate!

KATE (*pleadingly*). Tell me you will bring him back, Dudley!

DUD. (*compassionately*). Little woman, you make my duty hard for me. Come. (*lifts her by shoulders to standing position.*)

KATE (*looking up into his face imploringly*). You will bring Edward back to me?

DUD. (*gently*). For your own sake, Kate, I refuse.

KATE (*moving away from DUDLEY, looking at him strangely*). For my own sake! (*with low, hysteric laughter*). For my own sake!

DUD. I know the man, Katharine; he has made other women unhappy; he would make you unhappy.

KATE (*looking fearfully at DUDLEY with hand to cheek; intensely*). Dudley Brant; by what authority do you come between me and him whom I love?

DUD. By the authority of friendship, Katharine.

KATE (*bitterly*). Friendship! He is no friend who gives me pain.

DUD. God knows, I would spare you a greater pain.

KATE (*impetuously*). Who are you to judge? Who are you to say I shall marry this man or that? The selection is mine, and I will make it. This man I love and this man I will marry. I care not what he is or was.

DUD. (*gravely*). This is a different Kate from the one I knew.

KATE (*vehemently*). You hear? I love Edward Kingsley.

DUD. (*bitterly*). I hope not—I hope not!

KATE. And he loves me.

DUD. (*with emphasis*). No!—Such men as he can love naught else besides themselves. The outward forms of love are easily assumed. He is an adept at such and has deceived you.

KATE. It is a lie! (DUDLEY starts back as though she had struck him). Is this your kindness? Is this your friendship? Is this your boasted chivalry?

DUD. (*interrupting*). Kate—Kate!

KATE (*scornfully*). Is this Dudley Brant—the man whose good deeds ring throughout the neighborhood; the man whom people love and all believe? Is this your charity? (*fiercely*). I demand my share. I demand that which is naught to you but all in all to me.—I demand the man I love! (*pause*; DUDLEY remains quiet with arms folded). If you refuse, my friendship turns to scorn; my regard to hate, as one would hate a cruel man who strikes a woman.

DUD. (*gently*). Enough, Katharine.

KATE. He may have wronged you, but I am guiltless of that wrong. Why visit your revenge on me? Or do you envy him my love? You'll not change me by sending him away. From this time forth I hate you as an enemy;—a thief who stole my love.

DUD. (*harshly*). Is this all?

KATE (*turning away in an agony of feeling*). All! My God! What more can I say to plead my cause! (*falls into chair at table R. C. sobbing bitterly*).

DUD. (*standing over her*). If my heart is hard to-day it is to save you from yourself. Farewell. (*turns and exits at C.* KATE remains with head lying in arms at table. After pause, she raises head. Her eyes rest on note lying before her. Smooths it on table.) His note;—Edward's note! (*reads, with tearful voice*) "I am leaving Hadley quite suddenly. Though you will never see me again, do not forget me. Good bye, Kate. Think of me sometimes when you write in that little diary." Have I not thought of him every day—every hour almost in seven long years! (*rising, with sudden determination*). Now, to follow him! To find him—to marry him; if he will take me! And then away from Dudley, from Hadley—anywhere—anywhere! (*crosses quickly to R. 1 E. Opens door and calls off softly*). Anne!

ANNE. (*off R. 2 E.*). Yes, Kate.

KATE. I am going out, Anne. I may be gone for some hours. You will not worry?

ANNE (*off R. 2 E.*). No, dearie.

KATE (*closes door, crosses stage and exits L. 1 E. taking hat. Re-enters immediately with hat on and coat under arm; unlocks drawer in secretary at L. 1 E., taking from it a purse with money; is about to close secretary when she notices diary; picks up diary with tears in eyes*). He said: "Think of me when you write in that little diary." I was so happy yesterday. I was so happy this morning when he stood behind my chair as I wrote. (*idly turning leaves*). I thought that the years of waiting were at an end. I was so happy when I wrote "the most beautiful day in all the year, for Edward has come." A few hours ago I wrote those words—(*interrupting herself as note falls from diary*). What is this? A note? (*hastily unfolds note, dropping coat while sitting at secretary.*) From Edward! From Edward! (*reads eagerly*). "My darling: this man believes I have left Hadley forever. That is impossible after seeing you again. If you love me meet me in the orchard beneath your window at nine this evening. If you will marry me immediately this man's power over me will cease. You alone in all the world can save me. Edward." (*Lays note on secretary with radiant face. Slowly unpins hat and lays it on secretary, sits back in chair, drawing a deep breath, and letting eyes rest on note, which she takes up, repeating last sentence fondly*). "You alone in all this world can save me." (*leans slowly forward, letting eyes dwell on note with fascination; allows face to draw nearer and nearer note until it is crushed between her face and hands. Then both head and hands sink on secretary before her.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

THE BERWYN ORCHARD.—*Night. Rear of Berwyn homestead at L. C. B. House dark but for light in window, L. C., some six feet above ground. Door to left of window with flight of wooden steps leading down. Tree-trunks with bench seats at C., R. 1 E. and L. 2 E. Vista of lawn and moonlight at R. B. Low-hanging foliage.*

(DUDLEY discovered in shadow of tree at R. C.)

DUD. (*soliloquizing*). I fear I am a fool. I, a man nearing fifty, have turned night prowler; I, a respectable citizen, have avoided the highway, wishing to pass unobserved; I, a somewhat dignified man, have climbed a seven-foot wall and am now trespassing on my neighbor's estate. And what for? Twice during the past half hour have I seen Kate's figure outlined against that window; and each time I experienced a distinct sensation of pleasure. If I were young I should say I was sentimental. Not being young, there is no excuse for this folly. I am simply a fool, that is all. (*pause*). I was too stern with little Katharine this morning. In my indignation against the man she loves, I came near forgetting that her grief needed compassion. Ah, me; to think that Providence should select me of all men to give her pain. Will she ever forgive me! (*turns from window crossing C., his attention suddenly attracted off R.*) Ah, I am not the only night prowler. Whom have we here? (*crossing quickly, conceals himself behind tree L. 2 E.*)

(*Enter HARVEY and ELMER R. 1 E.*)

ELMER. What brought you in here, Harvey?

HAR. (*in an undertone*). Elmer, there's something up. (*looking around carefully*). It's thet cuss from the city—thet Mr. Kingsley. Where dy'e suppose he's been all day?

ELM. I give it up, Harvey.

HAR. (*pointing off L. 3 E.*). He's been over on the hill in the wood there. Thet's where he's been.

ELM. (*indifferently*). What was he doin' there,—catchin' mosquitos?

HAR. No, he wasn't ketchin' anythin'. He was just sitting on a rock there,—thinkin'.

ELM. Well, thet ain't much to be doing.

HAR. Now do you know what I'm thinkin'? (*with deliberation*) I'm thinkin' thet thet city cuss is wantin' to marry Kate Berwyn.

ELM. (*surprised*). What! You think thet because he sat on a rock over there, and—

HAR. (*interrupting*). No—no, Elmer. I'm thinkin' he wants to marry her because of some other things thet happened. Now he stayed right here in this orchard all yesterday afternoon with Kate; didn't he?

ELM. (*reflectively*). Thet's so, Harvey.

HAR. And along toward nightfall, when he thought nobody was around, I saw him kissing Kate in this orchard; thet's what I saw.

ELM. (*surprised and indignant*). Did you, Harvey? The confounded city cuss.

HAR. Now, thet's pretty serious, ain't it? Well, I know something thet's more so. I watched thet city cuss up in the woods all afternoon and towards evenin', when it was getting quite dark, he slipped down to Hadley, being careful nobody should see him. Nobody did see him—'cept me.

ELM. (*looking at HARVEY with admiration*). You're a reg'lar detective, Harvey!

HAR. (*abruptly*). Shet up, Elmer, and listen. Thet city cuss sneaked up to Featherby's farm and called for a team. And guess what he said? He said he wanted to drive a lady over to Pine Grove, and thet he would probably marry her. Told old Featherby he'd give him ten dollars if the team was ready by sharp nine this evenin'. Then he seemed to recollect himself and told Featherby thet he was joking when he said he intended to marry the woman; but thet the ten dollars would hold good, just the same. I heard every word of it.

ELM. Gorsch, Harvey—but how do you know its Kate?

HAR. Who else would he be wantin' to marry after kissing her in this orchard yesterday? Besides, he don't know any other women in Hadley.

ELM. None 'cept Sue Perknis and Jane Holly.

HAR. And he wouldn't marry them, of course.

ELM. (*reflectively*). Thet's so, Harvey. Nobody would marry them—leastwise, nobody thet's sensible.

HAR. Now, what we want to do is to warn Billy. Billy's interested in Kate, and he'll settle thet city cuss.

ELM. Billy hasn't much nerve, Harvey.

HAR. Well, thet depends on how much he's been drinkin'. How much hez he been drinkin', Elmer?

ELM. Same as usual.

HAR. Well, that ought to be enough. (*as ELMER is about to exit*). Wait, Elmer. Before we tell Billy, we want to get that pistol of his. Billy would shoot ef he's drunk enough, and we don't want to hev any shootin'. Fists is the things we're goin' to use to-night, Elmer.

ELM. Billy will be drunk, and I'll get that pistol all right.

HAR. Come along then. (*exit HARVEY and ELMER L. 2 E. running. DUDLEY leaves shadow of tree at L. 2 E. and crosses to c.*)

DUD. I know what led me across these fields; I know what led me to scale that wall; I know what led me to be a fool; it was Providence. Providence, which has given Kate one more chance to save herself from this man. So the rascal deceived me. Now, let me see—let me see. (*paces stage at c. thoughtfully*). Shall I summon the sheriff and arrest the fellow? (*looks at watch*) There is scarcely time for that. (*with determination*) No; I shall take the advice the boys gave me. Yes, Harvey; fists are the things to-night. I shall thrash Edward Kingsley so thoroughly that he will not think of marriage for a twelvemonth. Ah! (*starts quickly behind tree at R. c. at click of casement L. c. B. Casement is opened by KATE, whose figure is outlined in window frame. Furnished room within, piano at back. KATE leans against casement frame looking out.*)

KATE (*murmuring*). It is time—it is time! Why does he linger? I love all things to-night. How beautiful is the sky, the earth—everything. Hadley was never so perfect as in this moonlight. Why does Edward linger? (*turns into room and sits at piano singing softly:*)

"Come, my love, the stars are shining,
Time is flying, love is sighing;
Come, for thee a heart is pining—
Here alone I wait for thee."

(*as KATE sings, DUDLEY's attention is attracted off L. 2 E. He suddenly draws back, retreating behind tree at R. 1 E.*)

(*Enter EDWARD, during last lines of song, at L. 2 E. Stands in glare of light from open casement, looking at KATE.*)

EDW. (*as KATE concludes singing*). Kate, I am here.

KATE (*rising from piano with joyous cry and hastening to window*). Edward! (*EDWARD goes up close to window, seizes her hand and kisses it*). Wait! (*hastily leaves casement. DUDLEY takes step toward EDWARD when KATE appears in doorway, L. c. B. DUDLEY draws back to tree. KATE descends steps.*)

EDW. (*embracing her at foot of steps*). My darling!

KATE (*with arms about his neck as she stands on step above him*). You have come—you have come!

EDW. Never to leave you again, little Kate.

KATE. Dudley told me that the train was taking you from me.

EDW. He lied to you, Kate.

KATE. But why did you leave?

EDW. I was powerless to resist. (*they cross and sit at rustic bench under tree at c.*) Only a lucky inspiration prevented him parting us forever.

KATE (*looking up into his face*). Edward, what power does this man hold over you?

EDW. (*evasively*). Hush, Kate; let us not speak of him. We are re-united to-night. Let us think of naught but ourselves and the future.

KATE (*speaking firmly, while releasing herself from EDWARD's embrace, and rising*). Ah! But I wish to know.

EDW. (*rising also*). Wherefore?

KATE. Because that question may concern our happiness. (*EDWARD paces stage thoughtfully, then approaches KATE*).

EDW. Kate, there is a carriage waiting beyond the orchard wall.

KATE (*smiling and giving him her hands, which he clasps*). A carriage—for us?

EDW. Will you marry me, little girl? The license is in my pocket: the minister is waiting at Pine Grove, five miles from here. (*KATE allows her head to sink thoughtfully*). Do you love me enough to marry me, Kate?

KATE (*slowly; looking fixedly in his face*). Yes, I love you enough to marry you.

EDW. (*about to joyfully clasp her in his arms*). You will marry me, to-night—?

KATE (*gently resisting him*). Wait! My question must be answered first.

EDW. (*impatiently*). What time is this for questions? Marry me, and I'll spend my life in answering them.

KATE (*smiling seriously*). It might then be too late. Once bound, a woman loses much authority.

EDW. Will you marry me if I answer this?

KATE. Yes.

EDW. You will marry me immediately?

KATE (*with a little hesitation*). If you insist.

EDW. (*kissing her hand*). I do insist. Out with your question then; I long to have done with it. (*paces stage thoughtfully at l.*)

KATE. Dudley Brant spoke with you this morning. He threatened you. What power was his to drive you away from me; away from Hadley?

EDW. This is your only question?

KATE. Yes—but it must be answered to my satisfaction.

EDW. That is not difficult. I confess I was afraid.

KATE (*smiling*). Evidently.

EDW. (*quickly*). Not of him, but of you.

KATE (*curiously*). Of me?

EDW. I feared the effect of something he could tell.

KATE. About yourself?

EDW. (*hanging head*). Yes, Kate.

KATE (*going up to him gently*). Edward, I want you to tell me everything that Dudley could or would.

EDW. (*expostulating*). Kate!

KATE (*with gentle decision*). Everything.

EDW. (*looking down at her*). Don't you trust me, little girl?

KATE. Don't you trust me? I would know the man I marry; that is all. You need not fear my love, for women forgive some men too easily. Tell me all. If you have trouble, I wish to bear my share; if you have sinned, I can forgive and sympathize. (*firmly*) But tell me *everything*. (EDWARD *paces stage irresolutely*.)

EDW. You might not forgive so readily as you think.

KATE (*with tears in eyes*). Is your guilt so great? Have you been so very weak? I am pained to hear that speech from you. (*stamping foot with determination*). But tell me all; for it is my right to know. Tell me—or I leave you here and now.

EDW. (*looking at her sharply; then in penitent tone*). Kate, I have wasted some opportunities.

KATE (*encouragingly*). Who has not, in a lifetime?

EDW. (*humbly*). I have spent some time in riotous living. Dudley Brant could tell you I am a spendthrift. He sets a high standard for young men's morality. He could prejudice you against me, Kate.

KATE (*interrupting, with hand to heart*). Wait!—Tell me of this moral standard in which you failed. Do you refer to money extravagance or—to—something else? (*with effort*.)

EDW. (*laughing harshly*). You see, your forgiveness does not go far. (KATE *starts back from him turning away*.)

KATE (*after pause*). Yes, yes, I can forgive, but it is hard. (*turning on him*) It is cruel, I say. Why do men demand that of women which they cannot give themselves?

EDW. (*submissively*). I have been weak; I can offer no excuses.

KATE (*with feeling*). No; excuses are all too weak for such. (*throws herself on bench at tree c. with face hidden in arms*. EDWARD *kneels penitently beside her, taking her disengaged hand and caressing it*.)

EDW. My darling! I feared it would be so. Very well, I

will go. Good bye, Kate. (*remains kneeling, holding her hand. KATE silent.*) What is it to be? Shall I go and have my life ruined forever; or remain, and make you happy? (*bitterly as KATE remains silent*) I dare say you'll not miss me. Dudley Brant remains; you will have his love. (*rising and speaking with vehemence*). I hate that man. Since I have known him my life has all gone wrong. It is he who stands between us. It is he who is stealing my place in your heart. (*kneeling and throwing arms about her while speaking earnestly*). Will you let me stay Kate, darling? I wish to begin life over again. I cannot; I will not go away. With you I shall put the old life behind me; with you I shall become a good man.

KATE (*sitting up suddenly and looking into his face*). Can I trust you when you say that?

EDW. Try me, Kate.

KATE. And if you fail.

EDW. I cannot fail with you.

KATE. You have nothing else to confess?

EDW. Nothing.

KATE (*risks and comes thoughtfully down R., standing within a few feet of DUDLEY. DUDLEY has made no attempt to conceal himself during the foregoing scene, but stands a stern, silent listener. In shadows he is unnoticed by either. KATE turns to EDWARD.*) I have always dreamed of marrying a noble man. A man who, throughout his life was faithful to me, even as I have been faithful to him. You are not that man, Edward Kingsley.

EDW. (*with downbent head*). I have said I am unworthy.

KATE. The Edward Kingsley I knew years ago was brave and ardent; anxious to battle with the world; to meet and overcome it honestly. I trusted; I waited for that man; though people scorned my trust and waiting.

EDW. Would to God I had married you then; my life would have been lived somewhat differently.

KATE (*drearily*). We must sacrifice many ideals in life. Edward, I have your promise; you have my trust for the future; my happiness is in your keeping.

EDW. (*eagerly*). You will marry me, Kate?

KATE. Yes.

EDW. (*folding her in his arms*). My darling,—my Kate!

KATE. Come, the carriage is waiting. (*EDWARD and KATE are moving slowly toward L. 2 E., when DUDLEY crosses L. quickly standing before them.*)

DUD. (*with quiet emphasis*). Wait! (*EDWARD and KATE start back in astonishment.*)

KATE (*clinging to EDWARD's arm*). Dudley Brant!

DUD. I have been listening. I have no excuses to offer. I have merely this to say: That man at your side has lied to you. (*KATE and EDWARD look at DUDLEY with frightened faces. With cold determination*) I have this to say also: that man whom you wish to marry is a thief. He did not make that confession.

KATE (*starting away from EDWARD indignantly*). Edward! Strike that man! He is insulting me as well as yourself. (*EDWARD remains quiet, nervously clenching his fists.*)

DUD. (*defiantly*). I am insulting a cur who has not the courage to resent it. See—he does not deny the accusation. He cannot!

EDW. (*looking at DUDLEY*). I dare not—as you well know. Tell her all.

KATE (*astounded*). Edward!

DUD. Within an hour I can place this fellow in the county jail. His crime is the embezzlement of certain sums of money four years ago.

KATE. This is not so.

DUD. Ask him.

KATE (*looking at EDWARD*). Edward!

EDW. (*humbly*). It is the truth. You now understand his power over me.

KATE (*murmuring incredulously*). A thief,—Edward, a thief!

DUD. (*with shade of triumph in his voice*). Do you still wish to marry this man?

EDW. I'll go away, Kate—

KATE (*going quickly to EDWARD*). No! (*to DUDLEY*). He has my promise; my love. Though he be the lowest blackguard, I'll not forsake him now.

DUD. (*starting back*). Be careful, be careful Kate; you know not what you do.

KATE (*looking at DUDLEY*). I love him.

DUD. Four years ago he was my trusted secretary; in business my secrets were his own; I raised him socially; a career awaited him—I meanwhile watching his progress with a father's interest. How did he reward that interest? He defrauded me, taking large sums of money trusted to his keeping. Such is that man's gratitude.

KATE. Nevertheless, I love him.

DUD. (*with anger*). He is a spendthrift, as he himself has confessed. A selfish nature his, and mercenary. He loves your property more than yourself.

KATE (*defiantly*). I love him!

DUD. He is a profligate. Though young in years he is old in vice. Two women in that distant city curse his name.

KATE. I love him.

DUD. (*madly*). You will not sacrifice yourself to such a man as this?

KATE (*with vehemence*). I love him! Yes, Dudley Brant.

DUD. (*losing patience*). Fool—fool! You are unworthy of an honest man's regard. (*turns away, leaning against tree c. with hand pressed against forehead.*)

KATE. (*tearing herself free from EDWARD's embrace*). Listen, Edward Kingsley. There is yet one chance to absolve yourself with me—to prove that one, at least, of this man's insults is a lie. He says your love is mercenary. Were that true, I would despise you—my love would fall stone dead all in an instant. However I have the test.

EDW. What do you mean?

KATE (*watching his face closely*). Edward Kingsley, this farm, this property, is mine no longer. Its owner we thought dead for many years. That man, that son of Mrs. Berwyn, has returned, and all, by law, belongs to him. Will you marry me now, half beggar that I am? Will you prove his falsehood and your love?

EDW. (*grasping her roughly by the wrists*). Kate! Is this true?

KATE. Yes. (*trying to disengage hands*). You are hurting me.

EDW. (*pushing her from him*). You deceived me, then!

KATE (*in amazement*). Deceived you?

EDW. Curses upon it all!—No! I'll not marry you!

KATE (*with agony of emotion and indignation*). Edward!

EDW. (*looking off L. 3 E.*) What's that? Lights! People coming! (*to KATE who has approached him*) Away, I say! (*to DUDLEY while looking fearfully over shoulder to L. 3 E.*) What is it—the sheriff?

KATE (*laughing hysterically*). My God! Dudley is right—Dudley is right! (*sinks into seat at tree, L. 1 E., where she sits watching EDWARD with face expressive of great self control over terrible internal agony.*)

EDW. (*shaking DUDLEY's shoulder*). Is it the sheriff? Is it the sheriff? Tell me, Dudley Brant, tell me! (*DUDLEY does not heed*). I'll leave this cursed place—I'll go away—I won't trouble you again. (*glancing fearfully toward L. 3 E.*) But I won't be taken—I won't be taken! (*turns and exits swiftly R. 2 E., looking back over shoulder with frightened face.*)

(*Enter L. 3 E. a crowd of excited country people headed by WESTERN BILLY. HARVEY and ELMER carry lanterns. SUE and JANE, TILLY and CALEB BUMMELL among crowd. Not seeing KATE and DUDLEY, they clamor against house at L. C. B.*)

BILLY (*in husky, drunken tones, calling up at window*). Kate! Kate!

CALEB. Want's to run away with Kate, does he?

ELM. We'll settle him. (*voices in crowd "Aye—aye! We'll settle him!" Hum and noise of people speaking earnestly and pointing up at house.*)

ANNE (*appearing in doorway L. c. B.*). Well, land's sakes alive, what's all this!

BILLY (*roughly*). Where's Kate? (*crowd murmurs "Aye—where's Miss Kate."*)

ANNE (*indignantly*). Well, that's not any of your business; is it? Go home, the whole pack of you! It's time honest people were abed. Western Billy, don't come with those boots on this step; I scrubbed it before sundown.

BILLY (*hoarsely*). I want ter see Kate!

HAR. (*pointing to where KATE sits near L. 1 E.*). There she is, Billy. (*all turn and crowd curiously as BILLY comes down c.*)

BILLY (*to KATE*). So, there you are?

KATE (*rising and supporting herself with one hand against tree trunk*). Well?

BILLY. I heerd you wuz gettin' married; I heerd you wuz goin' off with thet city chap.

KATE. Why did you bring these people here?

BILLY. I knew it wuzn't true: I said it wuzn't true when I heerd it. Gals ain't throwing away chances to marry a man with property. Gals like you air too level-headed.

KATE (*coldly*). I don't understand you.

BILLY. Yes, yer do, Kate: yer know thet to keep Berwyn, yer must marry me.

KATE (*scornfully*). Leave this place, immediately!

BILLY (*astounded*). Leave ther place! Now, look 'yer, Kate; none of yer domineering over me. We ain't married yet, and mebbe we won't be.

KATE (*sternly*). Shall I call the farm hands and have you taken from here by force? Your presence—your proposals are insults!

BILLY (*furiously*). Insults! Put out by force? Who's goin' to do it? I'd riddle him full of holes. (*changing manner and becoming suddenly submissive*). I don't want ter fight with yer, gal. Come, tell me yer'll marry me, and I'll leave this instant. I'll go to please yer, Kate.

KATE (*with scorn*). Marry you? I would rather marry the meanest beggar coming to this door! You are a drunkard, a coward, a fool, moreover, to think I would stoop to you. I despise you and order you to leave this place!

BILLY (*wild with rage*). Despise me, do yer? All right, my beauty! You didn't despise my farm on which you've lived these five years. Yer didn't despise thet. You put me out of Berwyn? Why, yer can't! The farm's mine—mine by law, and curse me ef I leave it till I'm ready. (*throws himself in tree seat at c. reclining with boots perched up over arm.*)

ANNE (*interrupting*). Now, look yere, you big bully! Don't talk to Kate like thet or I'll put you out myself. I managed my Silas in his time and I think I kin manage you.

BILLY (*roughly*). Get out of the way, old woman!

ANNE (*indignantly*). Old woman? Jest wait till I get my broom: I'll Western Billy you! (*exit hastily up steps of house L.C.B.*)

BILLY. Naw—Kate, we'll stow thet kind of talk. Ef there's any putting out of Berwyn to be done, why I'm the one to do it; see? Not a charity child, like you.

KATE. Is there no man here to defend me from these insults? (*DUDLEY walks quickly up to BILLY, pushing his boots from their elevation to the ground and, collaring him, sends him with quick jerk spinning against tree at R. 2 E.*.)

DUD. You scoundrel! Get on your knees and beg Miss Berwyn's pardon!

BILLY (*furiously*). On my knees? Western Billy on his knees? Yer want her yerself! (*springing at DUDLEY*) I know yer game! (*DUDLEY strikes him as he rushes forward, and BILLY staggers backward; madly recovering himself*) What! I'll kill yer fer thet! (*draws a knife and circles toward DUDLEY for an opening. Women in crowd scream as BILLY approaches DUDLEY, when ANNE suddenly runs down steps L. C. B., broom in hand, and seeing DUDLEY's danger, thrusts broom between BILLY's legs. BILLY trips, and DUDLEY seizing him by throat, wrenches knife from his hand; knife flies across stage.*)

DUD. (*fairly dragging BILLY to KATE's feet*). Beg her pardon! Beg her pardon, you dog, or I'll throttle you!

BILLY (*gasping*). Pardon,—(*DUDLEY releases him. He staggers to his feet, pulling at his collar*). Thet—thet—was—insult, Mr. Dudley Brant. Yer got to fight me fer thet!

DUD. (*quietly*). Very well.

BILLY. You'll meet me at Hadley Falls to-morrow morning. You'll meet me, or by God, I'll shoot yer in the street! I'll do it!

KATE (*in low voice, at DUDLEY's elbow*). Dudley, you must not think of this.

BILLY. Ef he ain't a coward he will, or—

DUD. (*to BILLY in quiet voice*). At six to-morrow morning! (*people whisper among themselves, eyeing DUDLEY and BILLY with interest.*)

BILLY (*recovering his boastful self-possession*). Very well, Mr. Dudley Brant. I'll advise yer to take something to keep yer courage up. Yer may hev heard thet I wuz a dead shot out thar in Arizona: and I'll kill yer—I'll kill yer as sure as my name's Western Billy. At Hadley Falls to-morrer morning. (*exit L. 3 E. People look after him in awe-struck manner. ELMER whispers and nudges HARVEY, and both exit after BILLY.*)

KATE (*speaking with low voice, and laying hand on DUDLEY'S arm*). Dudley, your hand is bleeding!

CURTAIN.

NOTE.—*For curtain call, tableau of people gazing after BILLY; a few looking curiously at DUDLEY. KATE bandaging DUDLEY'S hand with handkerchief.*

ACT IV.

SCENE.—DUDLEY BRANT'S LIBRARY. *Comfortably furnished room; double doors at C. B. with bolts; broad casement at L. C. with window seat in alcove and movable curtains between window and room. Blue Room at R. C. B.; a small blue painted chamber visible through doorway, with heavy movable door, in which may be seen a roll top desk, desk chair and safe. Book cases with books in corners of walls of room; table with chairs at R. C.; small table near L. 1 E.; small cabinet hanging beside door of Blue Room.*
(Enter DR. PEABODY hastily at C. and crosses towards R. 2 E.)

DR. P. (*calling*). Polly, Polly! Where are you?

(Enter POLLY at R 2 E.)

POLLY. Here I am. (*rushes to DR. PEABODY, hiding her face on his shoulder.*) Don't tell me a word about it, Dr. Peabody.

DR. P. (*surprised*). Not tell you? Why, Polly!

POLLY. I'm afraid. Was he killed? Were they both killed? (*placing fingers on DOCTOR'S lips*). But don't tell me,—don't you dare to tell me.

DR. P. (*somewhat piqued*). I came to tell you we could get married.

POLLY. I don't want to get married. (*DOCTOR starts away from her*). I don't want to get anything. I only want dear, dear Mr. Dudley to come home again.

DR. P. (*jealously*). Well, you seem mightily concerned about him!

POLLY. Of course I do. And so would you, if you lived in this house and knew what a dear, kind gentleman he is. He left at five o'clock this morning to meet that horrid Western Billy, and we have not seen nor heard from him since. Do you suppose he really fought a duel, Dr. Peabody?

DR. P. Of course not; I credit Dudley with having more sense.

POLLY (*anxiously*). But suppose they fought, and suppose Mr. Dudley is killed? Oh, suppose Mr. Dudley is killed, Dr. Peabody!

DR. P. Nonsense! Don't suppose anything of the sort, Polly. That meeting with Billy was to take place at six, and you say Dudley left the house at five. Take my word for it, he went

first for the sheriff to put Mr. Western Billy in charge. Dudley spent the rest of the day at Hummington, thirty miles from here, where he had business to attend to. He spoke of going there, yesterday.

POLLY (*more calmly*). Do you think so, Dr. Peabody? Do you think he had Western Billy arrested?

DR. P. I am sure of it. You don't suppose that a law-abiding old fellow like Dudley would fight a duel, do you? I doubt if he knows one end of a pistol from another. Certainly he does not know how to discharge one.

POLLY (*quickly*). Now, don't talk in that manner about Mr. Dudley. (*with emphasis*). He is the dearest, best man in Hadley, and not a bit old. (*shaking head with determination*).

DR. P. (*jealously*). Oh, he is the "dearest, best man in Hadley," is he?

POLLY (*shaking finger at Doctor*). Now, Dr. Peabody, you are jealous.

DR. P. (*turning away*). I am not, Polly—no such thing.

POLLY (*crosses to him*). You are; I can see it in your face. Come, sir, confess.

DR. P. I shall do nothing of the kind, Polly.

POLLY (*pleading*). Do confess it, Dr. Peabody. I like it; I want you to be jealous. Indeed I do.

DR. P. Then I shall not humor you, Polly.

POLLY. Confess and you may have—

DR. P. (*as she hesitates*). What?

POLLY (*looking up at him*). Something you like best.

DR. P. I confess—I am jealous of my Polly. Now, what am I to have?

POLLY (*elevating lips invitingly*). Guess!

DR. P. (*kissing her*). There; is that it?

POLLY (*contentedly*). What a mind-reader you are, Dr. Peabody. (*releasing herself from his embrace*). Now, what were we talking about? Oh, yes; about Mr. Dudley. They say he was awfully fierce at Berwyn last evening.

DR. P. I heard of that. I declare it is disgraceful. I don't know what has come over the man.

POLLY (*nodding head positively*). I do, Dr. Peabody.

DR. P. You do? What is it? (POLLY *whispers to Doctor, who starts back with surprise*). No! What; with Kate? (POLLY *nods her head*) Why, Dudley is too old. I'll give him a talking to.

POLLY (*glancing toward doorway c.*). Hush, here is Kate now. She has come every hour this day to inquire after him. (*significantly*). Think of that, Dr. Peabody!

(Enter KATE at c. Comes down to POLLY at l. c. anxiously).

KATE (*to POLLY*). Has he returned?

POLLY. Not yet, Kate.

KATE. I am so concerned for him. He was so noble, so brave in my defense. I did not deserve it, Polly; I insulted him yesterday.

POLLY (*in grieved tone*). Kate!

KATE (*as she and POLLY seat themselves at L. c.*). Yes; I insulted Dudley,—the man who defended me; the man I am indebted to for so many favors.

POLLY. Don't worry, dear. Dr. Peabody, thinks he went to Hummington; he spoke of going there to-day.

KATE. But would he not tell you, Polly?

POLLY. I did not see him. Just think; I never knew of that dreadful duel till after he left the house this morning. He forbade Auntie Sue telling me.

KATE. It is like him; he is as thoughtful as he is brave and generous.

DR. P. (*who has been looking from window, L. c. Coming down*). Now, Kate; don't worry about Dudley. Positively I'm ashamed of the man. It was bad enough to pick a quarrel in your presence, but—

KATE (*rising and interrupting him with dignity*). Understand, Dr. Peabody, that Mr. Brant picked no quarrel in my presence. I was insulted and he defended me—defended me, moreover, in a manner few men would have the courage to adopt. (*goes up stage.*)

DR. P. (*turning away R., aside*). So, so; the wind blows that way; does it? Mayhap Polly's theory is correct after all?

POLLY (*as KATE moves toward c. door*). You are not going Kate?

KATE (*turning*). I must. We are very busy at the farm. To-morrow or the day following, we leave.

POLLY (*passing her arm about KATE's waist, consoling her*). What will we ever do without you? Mr Dudley will miss you, Kate. He so enjoyed those walks you had.

KATE (*stifling emotion*). Perhaps, perhaps. (*to DR. PEABODY*.) I am much concerned for Dudley's safety. Will you bring me any news you may receive of him? Will you bring it immediately?

DR. P. Why, certainly.

KATE. Thank you, thank you. (*KATE is moving off toward c. D. once more, when POLLY, who has been looking from window L. c., checks her.*)

POLLY. Wait, Kate; Auntie Sue is coming up the path. Perhaps she knows something.

(*Enter SUE PERKINS primly and coldly at c.*)

POLLY. Any news, Auntie Sue?

SUE (*after staring coldly at KATE*). Not a word. Western Billy, Harvey and Elmer returned three hours ago, and nobody can get a syllable out of them. (*gazing coldly at Dr. P.*) It is my belief they have murdered Dudley Brant and made away with his remains.

POLLY (*clasping hands in terror*). Oh, Auntie Sue!

DR. P. (*in disgusted tone*). Your surmises are so consoling, Miss Perkins.

SUE (*icily*). Doesn't it look like it, Dr. Peabody?

DR. P. No, it does not. Come, Polly; your aunt shall not frighten you. (*opens his arms to POLLY, who seeks their protection. To SUE*). I know that Dudley spent the day at Hummington. He told me yesterday of that intention.

SUE (*with cold sharpness*). As he did not tell me, I shall take the liberty of disbelieving you. Is it true that you are appointed railroad physician?

DR. P. It is the truth, Miss Perkins.

POLLY (*looking up quickly in astonishment*). Why, Dr. Peabody, you never told me a word about it!

SUE. I can well understand that, Polly. His sudden prosperity has probably turned his head. Perhaps he is already thinking of marrying some one else.

DR. P. (*holding POLLY tightly in his arms; to SUE indignantly*). Miss Perkins! (*to POLLY*) My darling, you did not give me a chance. You had so much to say about Dudley.

POLLY (*clinging to him*). I'm so glad, Dr. Peabody; I'm so glad!

SUE (*regarding them coldly*). So you are going to marry her?

DR. P. (*firmly*). I am, Miss Perkins.

SUE. Well, I am sorry for both of you. (*goes up to c. doorway, while POLLY and DOCTOR glance indignantly after her. Looking off L*). Here is that everlasting Jane Holly! I wish people would leave me alone this evening.

(*Enter JANE HOLLY at c.*)

JANE. (*wringing her hands and crying half nervously*). Sue; hev you heard anything from dear, dear Mr. Dudley? Thet wretch of a Western Billy is swaggering around Hadley drinking whiskey, and Dudley—maybe Dudley has taken his place among the angels. I always said he was an angelic man; he was so kind to us all; never cross, like you, Sue.

SUE (*interrupting snappishly*). Stop making a fool of yourself, Jane Holly! Dudley is not going to marry you, is he?

JANE (*still whimpering*). Well, not thet I know of, Sue, though the Lord knows, I'd sacrifice myself for Mr. Dudley.

SUE. Yes; and for any other man, I'm thinking.

JANE. I hev'n't thought of marriage for twenty years—now.

SUE (*interrupting*). Hev'n't thought of anything else, you mean.

JANE (*fanning violently*). Sue Perkins!

SUE (*snappishly*). Sit down, and keep quiet. I'm tired to death of company. (*glances significantly towards KATE.*)

JANE (*primly*). Oh, very well; if my presence ain't congenial, I won't infringe. (*goes up to c. door. Suddenly changes voice and manner on looking off L.*) Sue! Ef here ain't Caleb Bummel and Tilly walking arm in arm and looking as unconcerned as ef they were Adam and Eve, and Hadley wuz a small sized Paradise.

(*Enter CALEB BUMMELL and TILLY EMMONS arm in arm at c.*)

CALEB (*to TILLY*). Tilly, a man as is forty-four around the chest is a man worth having. And don't let nobody convince you to the contrary.

TILLY. Hush, Caleb; (*sweetly to company*) How do, Sue; how do, Jane and Polly—and the Doctor. And I do declare, there's Kate; well, I do declare.

SUE. Now, what did you come for, Caleb Bummell?

CALEB. Why, Sue; we thought we'd just drop in and see if Dudley got back. Now, ef Dudley takes my advice about Western Billy—

SUE (*interrupting sharply*). Dudley don't need your advice, Caleb Bummell.

CALEB. Well, I'm not saying thet he does, Sue; but it won't hurt him to hev it, nevertheless. Advice is sometimes good and it don't cost nothin'.

SUE (*sharply and with emphasis*). Is thet the reason you're giving it away, Caleb Bummell?

CALEB (*recovering*). Well; ef Dudley Brant would take my advice about his housekeeper—

SUE (*with temper*). You can't influence Dudley against me, Caleb Bummell. Matters have gone too far.

CALEB (*deliberately*). Thet's jest what I'm thinkin—matters hev gone too far and much further. Ef Dudley Brant knew the gossip spread about him by two unscrupulous, long-tongued, fabricating, unprincipled, (*with emphasis*) *old women* of this community, why he—he—(*nods head vigorously*).

SUE (*as CALEB hesitates*). Go on, Caleb Bummell,—go on!

JANE (*primly*). Hush Sue—he isn't referring to *us*. (*with dignity*). We are not *old*.

DR. P. (*laughing*). Come, Caleb, don't quarrel with the ladies. Let us hear your advice about Billy.

CALEB (*nodding his head sagely to SUE and JANE*). He would take his measures accordingly. (*turning to DR. PEABODY*). My

advice about Western Billy is, jail him! Jail him good and tight, and the sooner the better.

SUE (*spitefully to CALEB*). I'll tell Western Billy what you think of him.

CALEB (*with symptoms of uneasiness*). Well, now—you hed better not Sue. He is a dangerous man and there might be trouble if we two came together. (*in conciliatory tone*) So you hev'n't heard from Dudley?

SUE (*crossly*). No, I hev'n't.

TILLY (*softly*). Why, what's the matter, Sue? Ain't you feeling well to-day; you seem extra cross this evening?

SUE. I'm tired, and besides, I'm worried about Dudley; and here I've got to be bothered with a room-full of company. (*glances spitefully at KATE*). Dudley won't like it when he comes home.

KATE. I am going now, Polly.

POLLY (*rising and quickly going up to KATE*). Don't go Kate. (*looking from c. door off L. excitedly*) Look, look! Here comes Elmer! (*all crowd to door*.)

TILLY. My, don't he run!

CALEB. He must know something.

DR. P. (*in doorway*). Come in, Elmer; come in!

(*Enter ELMER at c. from off L. B. Sinks breathlessly in chair which CALEB places for him c. All crowd about chair.*)

KATE (*anxiously*). What is it, Elmer?

ELMER (*breathlessly*). Gorsch! I came near forgetting!

SUE. Forgetting what?

POLLY. Quick—oh, do speak!

KATE. Have you news of Dudley?

ELMER (*panting*). Yes!

POLLY. What is it? What is it?

ELMER. He said to tell you that he was all right.

SUE (*pouncing upon and shaking ELMER*). Wretch, why didn't you tell us that three hours ago?

ELMER. I forgot it; (*helplessly*) Stop!—Take her away! (DR. PEABODY *interferes between SUE and ELMER*) Besides, 'twas Billy who kep' me. He's getting drunk—

KATE (*interrupting*). What did Dudley say?

ELMER. He said to tell Miss Perkins—

SUE (*interrupting and clasping her hands sentimentally*). Ah, he remembered me—he sent his first message to me! Dear, dearest Dudley!

ELMER (*with emphasis*). He said to tell Miss Perkins and Polly that he wasn't hurt, and would spend the day in Hummington, where he had business to attend to.

DR. P. (*triumphantly to POLLY and KATE*). Now then; what did I tell you!

ELMER (*apologetically*). I forgot it, 'cause of Billy.

CALEB. But the fight, Elmer; tell us of the fight.

ELMER (*scratching head*). I'd like to, but I dassn't, 'cause Mr. Dudley asked me not to. (*reflectively*). Gorsch, it was awful!

KATE (*anxiously*). Was anybody hurt?

ELMER (*vehemently*). You bet!

SUE. Who? Dudley?

ELM. No—Billy!

JANE (*turning away and raising her hands sentimentally*). Thank heaven! Thank heaven!

DR. P. (*excitedly*). You don't mean to say that Dudley shot the fellow?

ELM. Naw! There weren't no shootin'! Mr. Dudley woloped him—woloped him until Billy—(*interrupting himself conscientiously*). But there—I'm telling yer all about it.

POLLY (*clapping hands*). Oh, goody, goody!

DR. P. Let us hear the story, Elmer.

ELM. (*scratching head*). You won't tell Mr. Dudley I told?

CALEB. Not a word.

ELM. (*slowly*). Well, then—you see Harvey and I wuz at Berwyn last night and we thought there'd be fun at the Falls this mornin'. Not that we feared any shootin'; cause we knew Billy would be sober. Billy drunk, is dangerous—riptail, roaring, dangerous; but Billy sober—gorsch, he wouldn't hev the nerve to chase an old cow. So we put Billy to bed and made things sure by smashing every whiskey bottle on the place. After that, we went to bed, too, feelin' quite safe and peaceable.

CALEB. (*as ELMER pauses*). G'long Elmer—g'long!

ELM. (*eyeing CALEB unfavorably*). G'long yerself, Caleb Bum-mell, and give a feller time to ketch his breath.

POLLY (*with hand on ELMER's shoulder*). Go ahead, Elmer, dear.

ELM. Well, then; when we roused Billy at five, he first looked for his bottle, and then rushed out for "an eye-opener" as he calls it. But ez we had tipped the bartender, he didn't get it, and thet made him mad. Billy threatened to lick the man and us, too, but he wuz sober then, you see, or nearly so, and didn't dare to try it. He didn't even ask for his gun, but told Harvey and me to come 'long to the Falls. Billy said he would bluff an apology to Dudley Brant there and shoot him in Hadley later. (*looking up seriously*). Indeed Mr. Dudley hed better look out—he might try it.

DR. P. (*interrupting*). Nonsense, Elmer—you will frighten the ladies.

SUE. What happened next?

ELM. Well, we reached the Falls, and there stood Mr. Dudley, straight and stiff with that little cane tucked under his arm. He looked awful stern, and talked quite abrupt-like. "Billy," sez he, "did yer come to fight?" "No," says Billy, "I didn't." "I thought not," says Mr. Dudley, and he turned to go away. Now that made Billy brave, and he yells, "I come to tell yer what a—" (*apologetically*) Well, he said a few things which he oughtn't to. But hearing that, Mr. Dudley turned and colared him, and the next moment was using that cane in a way that made things hum. And Billy just danced and yelled, and only broke away by jumping inter the creek, where he went swimming and swearing away as though the dev—as though Mr. Dudley wuz after him—which he wuz.

DR. P. Well, that is the most remarkable thing I ever heard of in this community.

KATE (*to ELMER, who rises from chair*). What is William Berwyn doing now?

ELM. He's getting drunk, Miss Kate.—He' wild agin Mr. Dudley, and swears—

DR. P. (*interrupting*). Never mind, Elmer; we will take care of Billy.

ELM. Me and Harvey hev tried to do that, and its the toughest job we've struck yet. I told Harvey I wouldn't stay, so I'll be right off again. (*goes up c. pausing in doorway*). Oh, I came near forgettin'. Mr. Dudley said he might stay over night at Hummington. Good bye, everybody. (*exit ELMER off c. and L. Room grows darker, twilight without.*)

CALEB (*gazing after ELMER*). Well, that boy would forget his head ef it wasn't on tight. Come along, Tilly, we've staid long enough.

TILLY (*going up c.*). Are you going over, Jane?

CALEB (*aside*). Hist, Tilly!

TILLY (*to CALEB*). Why not, Caleb?

JANE. I *will* go along. These Hadley roads are fearful lonesome, and there's no telling what might happen with Western Billys about. At such moments we females feel the need of a protecting arm, eh, Tilly?

TILLY. They do come in handy, that's a fact.

CALEB (*approvingly*). That's right, Tilly; every woman should hev an escort and if she keeps him through life, so much the better. (*pompously*) Now you ladies needn't be afraid, for with a man along measuring forty-four round the chest, why—

SUE (*interrupting sharply*). Good night. Take care of Caleb, Tilly and Jane. (*exit at R. 2 E. slamming door after her.*)

CALEB (*shaking fist after SUE*). That woman—that woman.

(*abruptly*) Come along, Tilly. (*grasps TILLY'S arm and hastily exits at c. off L.*)

JANE (*in c. doorway, gazing indignantly off L.*) Well, they seem to hev forgotten me. But Caleb has another arm, and thet arm I mean to hev. So now! (*marches determinedly off L. Room in dull twilight.*)

POLLY. How dark it has become. I will bring the lamp. (*exit R. 2 E.*)

KATE (*anxiously*). Dr. Peabody, I fear for Dudley's safety.

DR. P. Nonsense, Kate.

KATE. I know the revengeful spirit of this man. William Berwyn is as proud as he is treacherous, and will resent those blows. I hope Dudley will not return to-night. (*goes up to window L. c. and glances out into darkness.*)

DR. P. Now, Kate, you alarm yourself with idle fears. The fellow received a lesson this morning. Take my word for it, he will leave Dudley alone hereafter.

KATE. I have a strange nature, Doctor; an instinct warns me when danger threatens. I felt that warning the day William Berwyn returned; I feel it now.

DR. P. (*as POLLY re-enters R. 2 E. with lighted lamp which she places on table R. c. (Lights up).*) Hush; you will frighten Polly.

KATE (*suddenly*). Dr. Peabody, if Dudley should come to-night, tell him—tell him to be careful, for my sake. You will do this? (*looks earnestly up into DOCTOR'S face.*)

DR. P. Certainly, Kate; but he will not return to-night.

KATE. Thank you; thank you. (*exit hastily at c. and off L.*)

POLLY (*going closely to DR. PEABODY*). Does Kate fear for Dudley?

DR. P. (*passing arm about POLLY*). Yes, but they are foolish fears.

(*Enter DUDLEY R. 1 E. dressed in riding suit.*)

DR. P. Why, here is the man himself!

POLLY. (*running to DUDLEY with cry of surprise and delight*). Mr. Dudley. (*hides her face in hands against his shoulder.*)

DUD. (*stroking POLLY'S hair*). Why, Polly, what is this? Elmer delivered my message; did he not?

DR. P. He delivered it ten minutes ago.

DUD. The rascal! No wonder you worried. However, I'm alive and well—

DR. P. Whereas Kate and Polly were fully prepared to mourn your loss.

DUD. (*quickly*). Was Kate here!

POLLY. A dozen times this day. She was so anxious about you, Mr. Dudley.

DUD. (*thoughtfully*). Is it so? (*turns away musingly, then in jocular voice*). Peabody, I would not lose that cane for twenty dollars. (*lays cane on chair. To POLLY who hovers anxiously about him*). There, Polly, I'm entirely sound, as you can see. Now bring me some supper.

POLLY. Indeed I will, Mr. Dudley. (*exit POLLY R. 2 E. DUDLEY sits at table L. C. facing audience. DOCTOR sits near table. Re-enter POLLY with tea, which she pours and places before DUDLEY.*)

DR. P. My dear Dudley, you should have this fellow locked up.

DUD. I shall, Peabody, on the least sign of further trouble. Polly, that's a good girl; set a place for the Doctor.

DR. P. No—I am going immediately. I would like to take Polly for a drive, if you can spare her.

DUD. Polly, tell the Doctor whether I can spare you.

POLLY. Doctor Peabody, Mr. Dudley can spare Polly Brinton if you promise not to keep her more than one hour.

DUD. (*with assumed severity*). Remember, Doctor—not more than one hour. If the young lady chooses to extend the time, that is another matter.

POLLY (*catching DUDLEY around neck and kissing him*). Oh, you dear Mr. Dudley! (*suddenly*) Dr. Peabody, have you told Mr. Dudley about your appointment?

DR. P. No, I actually forgot it! (*about to rise*) Dudley, congratulate me, I—

POLLY. (*holding DOCTOR down in his chair and putting hand over his mouth*). I must tell, I must tell. Mr. Dudley, he has been appointed railroad physician on the P. & R. R. R. There now, what do you think of that?

DUD (*jumping up and shaking DOCTOR's hand*). My dear Doctor—my sincerest congratulations! Now, Polly, this is something like. I prophesy a wedding in Hadley in the near future. I have in mind a handsome present for the bride.

POLLY. Don't tell me—don't you dare to tell me what it is, Mr. Dudley.

DUD. I won't. But Polly—I should like to have something for supper besides tea. I have taken considerable exercise to-day, and it is wonderful what an effect exercise has on the stomach.

POLLY. I am so happy that I forgot all about your supper. (*exit L. 2. E. and re-enter with tray containing supper. POLLY sets table while DUDLEY and DR. PEABODY converse.*)

DUD. Now, Peabody, tell me all about it.

DR. P. Another time, Dudley—my affair can wait, but this one of yours may be pressing. Are you taking measures to protect yourself? This Westerner may prove dangerous.

DUD. My dear doctor, I took my measures this morning. Our friend from Arizona received a lesson that he will not forget. Sugar, Polly.

DR. P. But suppose he comes again?

DUD. He won't.

DR. P. I'm not so sure of that. Are you armed?

DUD. I had forgotten that. (*rises from chair and crosses to door of Blue Room at R. C. B. Takes revolver from back pocket and locks it in small cabinet hanging beside door of Blue Room.*) Peabody; did you ever notice the strength and security of my Blue Room? It is small, and not very well illuminated, but it is the most secure apartment in the house. Here I keep my desk, my safe and few valuables. My cane belongs here. Polly, will you hand it to me? (*POLLY hands cane*) Thank you. (*DUDLEY exits in Blue Room.*)

POLLY (*in doorway, looking into Blue Room*). Not a window in the room: only that tall, narrow skylight. Nobody could get in there.

DUD. (*re-entering*). Nor out, either. And here is one of the stoutest doors in Hadley. I defy anybody to pick the lock or break it down. I think my valuables are safe in the Blue Room, eh, Polly?

DR. P. But what on earth has the Blue Room to do with your safety?

DUD. Nothing, whatever. I am merely speaking of the safety of my valuables. I wanted to change the subject; you understand, Peabody? I do not intend Polly to be frightened. I intend Polly to take the drive you promised her, and if you won't have any supper, I would advise you to take her immediately. (*seats himself at table L.*)

DR. P. (*rising*). Very well; since you won't be warned—

DUD. Enjoy your ride, Polly; and don't let the Doctor frighten you with ghost stories.

DR. P. (*pausing before going up stage with POLLY.*) By-the-by, Kate was here just before you came in. Her message to you was: "Tell Dudley to be careful, for my sake." Au revoir, Dudley. (*exit DOCTOR and POLLY at C. off R. Quite dark without. DUDLEY sits motionless on hearing KATE's name.*)

DUD. (*meditatively*). Kate! (*continues eating. Stops*). Kate was concerned for my safety. (*smiles*) I owe Mr. Western Billy a debt of gratitude for that. (*musingly*). Kate was concerned for my—(*interrupting himself abruptly*). Pshaw! I am a fool. (*bitterly*) An old fool, at that—and what fool's so great as an old fool! (*pause*) What was her message? (*repeats words slowly*) "Tell Dudley to be careful for my sake." (*dwelling fondly on words*)

"For her sake." (*rising and going up c., standing in doorway looking off L.*) There is Berwyn; its lights glimmering faintly among the trees. (*fondly*). Kate is there! God bless Berwyn and all it shelters beneath its roof! (*turns into room, speaking practically*) I cannot think there is danger. Still, that fellow used a weapon yesterday. (*glances towards cabinet*). Shall I put that revolver in my pocket? (*with sudden determination*) No! (*returns to table*) I have always claimed that the man who carries arms in a peaceful community is somewhat of a coward. (*eating*). Dear, dear, how I shall miss Polly's omelets when she marries. (*enter SUE PERKINS at R. 2 E., primly. Sits on chair R. c. facing DUDLEY*) Good evening, Miss Perkins. (*continues eating*)

SUE (*pause*). Well; Polly is going to be married.

DUD. I am sincerely glad to hear it.

SUE. And what are you going to do about *me*, Mr. Dudley Brant?

DUD. (*looking up*). About you, Miss Perkins?

SUE. When Polly is married?

DUD. Ah, yes; I have not thought of that. You can stay, of course.

SUE. (*rising, with dignity*). Mr. Dudley Brant!

DUD. I beg your pardon?

SUE. When Polly goes, I go too—unless.—I can *never* stay under this roof as your housekeeper.

DUD. I know of no other position that you might hold on the premises, Miss Perkins.

SUE. (*changing her manner suddenly to exaggerated anxiety*). Dudley, Dudley, were you harmed this morning?

DUD. (*quietly*). Not in the least.

SUE. I was so anxious for your safety. You didn't know that I got up when you did.

DUD. I heard you drop a shoe on the floor overhead. I should have appreciated your anxiety had you come down and made my breakfast.

SUE. Who could think of breakfast at such a moment?

DUD. My stomach was thinking very seriously of it.

SUE. You didn't know that I watched you ride away; you didn't know that—I breathed a little prayer for you, Dudley?

DUD. (*aside, smiling*). That prayer must have done for Billy! (*aloud*) I am obliged to you, Miss Perkins.

SUE. Had you been brought home wounded—Oh, I was wishing you had been wounded, that I might show my devotion for you!

DUD. Thank you; under the circumstances you will allow me to say that I would rather not have your devotion.

SUE. I would have nursed your wounded limb—

DUD (*with twinkling eye*). Ah, you wanted him to shoot me in the limb, did you?

SUE. You would then appreciate—

DUD (*abruptly*). Another cup of tea, if you please. Polly makes it; does she not?

SUE (*handing him cup*). I was saying—

DUD. You were nursing my wounded limb. Sugar, please. (SUE *hands sugar*.) Thank you, I beg your pardon for interrupting.

SUE (*at c., extending one finger solemnly*). Dudley Brant; you have arrived at a crisis in your career. (*with emphasis*) You *have* to get married.

DUD (*with smile of comical alarm*). Good gracious,—do you really think so, Miss Perkins?

SUE. I *know* it. After Polly's marriage, you won't be able to keep a woman in this house. (DUD. *pauses in sugaring his tea*) So the question is "*Who are you going to marry?*"

DUD. (*complacently*). Ah, that is the question!

SUE. You want a woman with a heart, Dudley Brant.

DUD. I shall insist upon a heart.

SUE. And a head.

DUD. And a head, ditto.

SUE. You want a woman of education, of refinement. One who is accustomed to your eccentricities. (DUDLEY *looks up quickly, then drinks*). You are becoming absent minded, Dudley Brant. You want a woman who will comfort you in your old age. (DUDLEY *chokes in his cup*.)

DUD. (*slapping table*). Now, Miss Perkins, I am not decrepit, and will not be for some years to come. When I marry, I don't want a nurse. (*rises from table and crosses irately to Blue Room, R. C. B.; strikes match in doorway to light lamp within*.)

SUE. There is a report in the village, Dudley.

DUD. (*standing in doorway of Blue Room with lighted match in hand*). I don't care how many reports there are in the village.

SUE. There is a report in the village that you and I—(*hesitates*).

DUD. (*facing her sternly*). Well, Miss Perkins?

SUE (*with hesitation*). People are saying that you and I are engaged—to, be married—

DUD. (*vehemently casting down match which has burnt his fingers*). Confound it, Miss Perkins!

SUE. At last! At last, I must submit to abusive language!

DUD. (*irately rubbing finger ends on trousers*). I was referring to the match, Miss Perkins!

SUE. I know which *match* you were referring to, Dudley Brant!

DUD. Miss Perkins, let us understand one another. Don't encourage such scandalous gossip; deny that—that falsehood wherever you meet it!

SUE. Falsehood, indeed! You might do worse, Dudley Brant.

DUD. I know it. But look here, Miss Perkins; if I catch any masculine specimen of Hadley circulating gossip of that nature, I shall treat him to a dose of my bamboo cane. Unfortunately, one cannot administer to the women in that manner, (*pointedly*) although *they* are the ones who most deserve it. (*Turns into Blue Room, lights lamp above desk at back and arranges papers on desk.*)

SUE (*indignantly*). The wretch! The wretch! To presume to tell me that he *didn't* wish to marry me! And they call him a gentleman. I'll go and tell Jane every insult he heaped upon me. (*crosses and exits L. 2 E. DUDLEY, who is seated at desk in Blue Room turns in chair.*)

DUD. Miss Perkins! (*pause*). Miss Perkins! (*risks and comes down stage. Opens door L. 2 E. and looks off. Shuts door*). I was wrong, just now: I lost my temper before a woman. I owe Miss Perkins an apology. (*goes up c. door looking thoughtfully in direction of Berwyn*). Do all women regard me as an old man? I wonder—I wonder. (*walks thoughtfully into Blue Room, sits at desk with back to audience and writes. Pause.*)

(*Enter KATE at c.*)

MUSIC.

KATE. I could not remain at Berwyn. A fear oppresses me: a presentiment that Dudley is in danger. I wonder if he has returned? (*crosses R. but suddenly draws back in front of Blue Room door. Comes down hand to heart, still looking at DUDLEY.*) Yes, he is there! I cannot speak to him—I dare not. Not after my insults of yesterday. (*regarding DUDLEY lovingly*). How strong he was in my defense! How brave! I must thank him for protecting me last evening. I must thank him for risking himself for me this morning. Oh, I am indebted to him in a hundred ways. (*going up to c. door quickly and looking off L. with strained attention*). What is that? A figure running along the pike? It is Harvey, I think. Yes—

(*Enter HARVEY, panting from long run and almost staggering into KATE's arms. KATE places her hands on his shoulders. In low voice.*) What is it Harvey?

QUICK MUSIC.

HAR. (*breathlessly*). Mr. Dudley. I want to see Mr. Dudley!

KATE (*placing hand over his mouth*). Hush! (*crosses quickly and quietly to door of Blue Room, glancing in to see that DUDLEY*

has not been disturbed. Closes door noiselessly and crosses to HARVEY who is peering anxiously off L. from c. door). Now, what is the matter?

HAR. (*excitedly*). For Heaven's sake, Miss Kate—there'll be murder! Billy is drunk again—raving, roaring drunk as I never saw him before, and he's got his gun this time. He swears he'll shoot Mr. Dudley on sight, and he's coming up the pike on a run!

KATE (*with hands pressed to bosom*). He is armed, you say?

HAR. Yes! Billy wasn't drunk this morning, and that's the reason Mr. Dudley wolloped him so easy. But he's wild now, and when he's drunk he's brave. Mr. Dudley had better get out of the way.

KATE. (*pointing to door of Blue Room*). Dudley is there. (*HARVEY about to cross to Blue Room when KATE catches his sleeve*) Wait, Harvey, he must not know. He is brave enough to meet that man. (*clasps hand to forehead and paces stage excitedly*) What shall I do! There is danger now.

HAR. (*at c. door, looking L.*) Hurry, Miss Kate;—Billy is at the bridge.

KATE (*after glancing wildly from window to door of Blue Room*). I have it! (*runs to Blue Room door and hastily turns key in lock, taking key. To HARVEY*) Run Harvey—run! Get help—the sheriff—anybody! Quick! (*HARVEY exits hastily at c. off L. KATE closes and bolts doors at c. hastily; also casement at L. C. B.; comes down L. C.*) Is nobody in the house? (*opens door L. 2 E. calling anxiously*) Sue! Polly! (*crosses right, opens doors, calling.*) Polly! Sue! (*DUDLEY is heard moving in Blue Room.*)

DUD. (*within Blue Room*). Why, who locked this door! (*thud against double doors at c.*)

BILLY (*without c. in voice of drunken savageness*). Let me in! (*series of dull thuds against door c.*)

DUD. (*without door R. C. B.*) Who is without there!

KATE (*leaning against door R. C. B.*) Hush, Dudley!

DUD. (*in tone of surprise*). Is it Kate?

KATE. Yes. (*thuds against c. door cease. KATE crosses to window L. C. gazing off L.; bright moonlight without.*)

(*Enter WESTERN BILLY at R. 2 E. with lithe, swift motion; hatless, hair in disorder; shirt open at chest, eyes inflamed with drink and passion; pistol in belt. KATE concealed by a window curtain watches him.*)

BILLY (*in low, husky voice*). Caned me, did he! He'll pay for it!

DUD. (*without, R. C. B.*). Kate!

BILLY. Calling her! (*assumes threatening attitude with hand on pistol, facing door. R. C. B.*)

DUD. Unlock this door.

BILLY (*raising voice*). In thar, are ye! Come out!

DUD. (*sternly*). Is that you Billy? Leave that room!

BILLY. Not till we've settled our little score, Dudley Brant!

DUD. Kate—where are you! (*BILLY rushes against door, R. C. B. which resists him*).

BILLY (*furiously*). Locked yerself in, eh? Come out, yer white-livered sneak and coward! Yer've got ter face a man, this time!

DUD. I'll be there in a minute. Kate! Do you hear me—unlock this door!

BILLY. I'll get yer out! (*rolls up sleeves and is about to cross to window when his attention is attracted by KATE's movement behind curtains. Suspiciously.*) Who's thar? (*with hand on pistol*). Who's thar, I say? (*KATE throws back curtain. Pause. BILLY starts back in drunken astonishment*) Kate!

KATE (*bravely*). Well?

BILLY. So it's you, my beauty! (*jeeringly*) Now who would hev expected to find Kate Berwyn concealed here! A fine young leddy you air. Why ain't you locked in thar with him? Or wuz he in such a hurry to get away from Western Billy thet he left you behind?

DUD. (*sternly*). Kate, I command you to release me!

BILLY. (*turning to door R. C. B. furiously*). Yer coward; ter lock yerself in and blame it on the gal! I'll get yer out o' thar (*swings chair above his head, advancing to Blue Room door.*)

KATE (*crossing quickly and standing before door*). Be careful, William Berwyn!

BILLY (*savagely*). Out o' the way, yer fool! Yer'll get hurt! (*smashes chair against door where it splinters. KATE runs to window.*)

KATE (*looking through window anxiously*). No sign of them yet.

BILLY (*flinging down chair, upsetting table R. C. back, and sending flower jar spinning across stage*). Curse it! Curse it all! (*sees KATE*) Come away from thet window! (*dashes for her. KATE avoids him and crosses R. once more.*)

DUD. (*thumping on door R. C. B.*). Kate, my property is in danger! I can manage this fellow. I command you to release me!

KATE (*to DUDLEY*). No, no—he will kill you!

BILLY (*turning savagely on KATE*). What—you hev the key, gal? (*threateningly*) Give it up!

KATE. No!

BILLY. Give it to me, gal! I can take it!

KATE. You shall not harm Dudley.

BILLY (*grasping her hand*). Thet we'll see! (KATE *pulls away hand, shrinking from him with expression of loathing.*)

KATE. Don't touch me!

BILLY. How yer must hate me—don't yer? (*fiercely*).

KATE. Drunkard and coward that you are, I despise you!

BILLY (*furiously*). Very well! I'll kill him for those words. (*advances threateningly*). Give me thet key!

KATE (*tearing open neck of dress and thrusting key in her bosom*). Now, William Berwyn, take it if you dare!

BILLY (*his fingers working convulsively while gazing at KATE passionately*). You're a beauty, gal! How yer must love him!

KATE. As I hate you.

BILLY (*abruptly*). Very well.—(*goes quickly up to window, L. C. B. looking off L. Comes down to table R. C. gazing at KATE with passionate eyes. KATE retreats behind table endeavoring to fasten her dress.*)

DUD. Has that scoundrel hurt you? Let me hear your voice, Kate. Are you there?

KATE. I am here. He dare not lay hands on me. (*to BILLY, who continues to gaze passionately at her*). What are you going to do?

BILLY (*recklessly*). Going to do? Why, my beauty, I'm going to amuse myself. Since Mr. Dudley Brant locks himself in closets, leaving young ladies to entertain me, why—(*quickly turns out lamp on table between them at R. C. Stage dark except for broad belt of moonlight which streams through window at L. C. B.*) There; thet's fer a beginning!

DUD. (*off R. C. B.*). Quick, Kate—unlock the door. You need me now!

KATE. Yes—(*runs to door R. C. B. and hastily inserts key in lock. BILLY rushes forward and swings KATE back into center of room before she can open door. KATE rushes to window L. C. B. Key remains in lock.*)

BILLY. No yer don't! You stay in thar, Dudley Brant! It's my turn now!

KATE (*standing in moonlight gazing anxiously from casement, off L.*). Hurry, Harvey—hurry!

DUD. (*in fierce voice*). Lay a finger on Kate and I'll kill you!

BILLY (*standing in moonlight C. looking passionately at KATE who remains at window*). Why, how concerned you are about her!

DUD. (*desperately*). You came here to meet me. You can have that meeting, here—now—in this room—unarmed as I am! Kate will give you the key. Kate!

BILLY. I've got the key! It's in the door thar, and I'll use

it when I'm ready. Concerned about Kate, are yer? Well, I'm going to torture yer a little.

KATE (*looking through casement; aside*). I see the lights! They are coming!

BILLY (*advancing up stage in moonlight toward KATE who recoils against window at his approach*). As for you, my beauty; you despise me, do yer? My presence and language is an insult; is it? You shouldn't lock yerself in a room with a man yer despise like thet.

DUD. (*furiously*). Billy!

KATE. Don't come near me!

BILLY (*mockingly*). "Near you," my beauty? I'm going ter make love to yer. I'm going to fold yer in these arms and kiss those pretty lips. Thet's what I'm going to do!

DUD. (*frantically*). Billy!

BILLY. Ef only to make Mr. Old Fogey in thar a little nervous, and to repay yer fer despising me. No yer don't. (*catches her as she tries to evade him.*)

KATE (*struggling and calling*). Dudley—Dudley! (*DUDLEY beats frantically against Blue Room door. Hum of voices of approaching posse of citizens R. C. B.*)

BILLY (*struggling with KATE*). Those pretty hands can scratch, eh? (*seizes her wrists with one hand while holding her to him with other arm.*)

KATE. You brute! Let me go!

BILLY. Not yet, Kate, dear. One little kiss first; there, there, don't struggle so—(*throws one arm across KATE's shoulders, pressing her to him. KATE holds back her head with expression of loathing*). Are yer gettin' nervous, Dudley Brant? I'm only kissing Kate,—I might be killing you instead. (*Torches and lanterns of posse flare without window L. C. B. Hum of voices. Terrific knocks on doors at c. BILLY hesitates, still holding KATE and looking toward window*). Wut's that?

SHERIFF (*without c.*). Open this door. You are my prisoner!

DUD. Break down that door! He is assaulting Kate!

BILLY (*loosening his hold on KATE, who sinks to the floor, and assuming threatening position, facing c. doors and windows with pistol in hand*). Take me ef yer can! I'm Western Billy, and good fer twenty countrymen! (*as doors at c begin to yield*). Force thet door, and I'll shoot! (*battering without ceases, and voices heard in loud consultation.*)

(*Enter HARVEY and ELMER at R. 1 E. behind BILLY.*)

ELMER. I've got him, Harvey! (*springs on BILLY's back, pinning his arms to his body. HARVEY hastily slips bolts of door at c. and SHERIFF and posse rush in, seizing BILLY. Posse*

armed with pitchforks, clubs, axe-handles and lanterns. Two with torches remain without doors at c.)

DUD. (*pounding at door R. C. B.*). This door! This door! Will you open it!

SHERIFF (*at c.*). Why, who's in thar?

DUD. I—Dudley Brant! The key is in the lock. Somebody quick release me! (*HARVEY turns key in door R. C. B. and DUDLEY rushes out. Breaks through crowd and bends over KATE*). Katharine, Katharine!—My brave little woman!

CURTAIN.

ACT V.

SCENE.—*Same as Act I. POLLY seated at table, R. C., with writing material before her. SUE and JANE knitting in rose-bower at L. C.*

POLLY (*finishing writing and looking up from paper petulantly*). Never, never did I see such people! Both in love, yet both afraid to speak of it! What is worse they have stopped their visiting. A week ago Mr. Dudley called at Berwyn three times each day, and Kate came here as often. To-day nobody visits. Auntie Sue and Jane Holly sit there and gossip. (*motions towards L.*) At Berwyn, Kate is busy with departing; while in the house, Mr. Dudley mopes, and tries to read. (*impatiently*) As though a man in love could read! (*sympathizingly*) Poor Mr. Dudley, he read all yesterday and all this morning, and only turned one page. The book can't have much interest. (*pause*) Such a meeting as Kate and he had yesterday! It was all I could do to get him over there. Positively, I was ashamed of Mr. Dudley; he is usually so calm and self possessed. But yesterday he failed to find his tongue, and Kate was just as bad. Both seemed confused and bent on avoiding the other's eye. Then he tried to thank her, but not knowing what to say, his words sounded silly, cold and formal. I think he heard them, for he stopped quite suddenly, and there they stood. Then Mr. Dudley asks: "Do you leave Hadley to-morrow, Kate?" and Kate says "Yes," quite low and sadly. (*energetically*). If he hadn't been a goose he would have taken her in his arms right then and there. (*positively*) That was what she wanted—I saw it in her face. But no; another silence followed until Mr. Dudley abruptly said "good-bye," and left the house. And Kate just stood there helpless, never making a move to call him back. I *always* call the Doctor back when we have quarrels. (*pause*) Now, what's to be done? Shall Kate leave Hadley and Mr. Dudley remain a bachelor? Well, no indeedy! They must meet and explain before Kate leaves. But how to bring her here? Perhaps this note will do it. Let's see (*reads*) "Dearest Kate: Can you come immediately? Mr. Dudley is ill—*very* ill, and wishes to speak with you. Yours, POLLY." (*seals note with solemn face and looks at it lying on table.*) Now, what will they think of me for that? Heigho! What an

awful thing it is to straighten love affairs. But I'm doing this for Mr. Dudley's sake. (*rising*) I'll find Harvey and have him carry the note to Kate. (*goes up c. through hedge and exits R. 3 E.* During foregoing scene, SUE and JANE, while knitting, have carried on an expressive mimic conversation.)

JANE. Anyway, Sue, what d'ye think of it?

SUE. (*emphatically*). Disgraceful!

JANE. It wuz strange she should be locked in with Dudley.

SUE (*with voice full of meaning*). She's cute!

JANE. And stranger still for Dudley to be in thet little room.

SUE. She knew her business, Jane.

JANE (*glancing at SUE*). What d'ye mean by thet, Sue?

SUE. Mean by it? I mean the whole thing was cut-and-dried. Theatricals air effective, and thet fainting in the moonlight did for him. All done to draw Dudley on; thet's what I say.

JANE. I wonder ef thet wuz her idea, Sue?

SUE. What other idea would she have? Western Billy returns and she loses Berwyn. She must live somewhere, so she snaps up Dudley. (*impatiently*) Lord, but Dudley's a fool.

JANE. Most men air fools with pretty women, Sue. (*suddenly catching SUE's arm and looking through leaves of bower*). Look! There's Caleb and Tilly Emmons. (*TILLY and CALEB have entered from L. 3 E. and pause at hedge c. CALEB very attentive to TILLY in mimic conversation. TILLY hangs her head.*)

SUE (*aside to JANE*). Jane, he's proposin'!

JANE (*with interest*). Do you think so, Sue?

SUE. Why of course, Jane Holly; a man doing anything else wouldn't look so sheepish.

JANE. Thet's so. I've often wondered, Sue, jest how a proposal sounds. I ain't curious, but still—(*hesitates.*)

SUE (*promptly*). Since you propose it, suppose we sit still and listen? We'll hear every word and they'll never know we're near 'em.

JANE. But isn't it wrong to listen, Sue?

SUE. Wrong?—of course it isn't. Caleb Bummell won't say anything he's ashamed of others hearing, and if he does, he deserves to have 'em hear it. My conscience is easy on listening.

JANE. I'm kind o' nervous about it, Sue. (*CALEB and TILLY come slowly down, seating themselves on bench at c.*)

CALEB. You oughter marry, Tilly.

TILLY. I don't know, Caleb; I've had experience with one, and it wuzn't all honey. It's an awful thing to marry a man and then discover he ain't the husband you oughter hev.

CALEB. It's a woman's fault, Tilly—she does the picking.

TILLY (*pensively*). Thet's true; but sometimes there ain't much to pick from.

CALEB (*with emphasis*). You want a *man*, Tilly!

TILLY (*cooly*). Do you think so, Caleb?

CALEB (*swelling chest with importance*). A man as has a hundred acres, at least; a man as has a nest egg in the bank; a man as is a man, and looks it. A man as is forty-four around the chest and five foot seven in his stockings. Thet's the man you want, Tilly.

TILLY (*undecidedly*). I don't know, Caleb.

CALEB. But I do, Tilly. Lord, you can't go on hobnobbin' and drinkin' tea with them two ugly spinsters. (SUE and JANE suddenly sit erect with horrified faces) They ain't fit company fer you, Tilly.

JANE (*sharply aside to SUE*). Ugly spinsters? Who does he mean by that?

SUE (*moving her knees up and down with suppressed vehemence*). You know, Jane Holly, and so do I. (JANE sinks back in seat, fanning violently.)

CALEB. I hate ter see you with 'em, Tilly, you might ketch some of their ways.

TILLY. They are very respectable women, Caleb. (SUE and JANE nod at one another and sit up listening).

CALEB (*rubbing his chin dubiously*). Respectable? Yah! You know, Tilly, when women reach a certain age and style, nothin' else can touch 'em. Nothing else *will* touch 'em— (*with emphasis*). They've got to be respectable.

SUE (*restraining herself with difficulty*). I'll fly out in a minute, Jane!

JANE. Don't do it, Sue, you'll disgrace us forever.

CALEB (*to TILLY*). Those two women, Tilly, air a public nuisance.

TILLY. Why, what do you mean, Caleb?

CALEB. Mean? I mean they're giving unmarried men no peace in Hadley. (*with righteous indignation*). Why, Tilly, there was old Dillyflower, who married his housekeeper last week. Thet poor man confessed to me thet Sue Perkins drove him to it. She would lay fer him when he came out of his gate, and sometimes hed the impudence to walk in when the man was sitting quiet and peaceable on his own front porch. There was no escaping her, Tilly.

SUE (*who has risen and is peering through leaves of bower at CALEB*). Oh-h-h-h!

JANE (*pulling SUE into seat*). I told you you wuz going it too strong with Dillyflower, Sue.

TILLY. Sue may be giddy, Caleb, but Jane—

CALEB (*interrupting scornfully*). Jane Holly? Thet old bundle of bones? She's worse than the other. She wuz hanging 'round farmer Andrews a week after his wife's funeral telling him thet the only consolation fer a man's losing one woman was to take up another. Don't talk to me about Jane Holly.

JANE (*rising*). I'm going to give Caleb a piece of my mind.

SUE (*pulling her into seat*). No you don't, Jane.

CALEB. The pair of them ought to be thrown in the fishpond. (*both JANE and SUE bound out of their seats and glare helplessly at one another, and sit down again.*)

TILLY. Mr. Bummell, I shall leave you if you don't speak more respectful of my friends.

CALEB (*tenderly moving nearer*). Don't do thet, Tilly, and don't call me Bummell. Call me Caleb. Do you know, Tilly, the only thing about myself thet I don't particularly like is—Bummell.

TILLY (*cooly*). Bummell isn't such a pretty name as Emmons, Caleb.

CALEB (*authoritatively*). Now look here, Tilly, I've no objections to a decent veneration for Emmons; but I don't want to hear the name of Bummell trampled under it—especially when you've got a sneaking likeness for the same.

TILLY (*sharply*). Who said I hed a "*sneaking likeness*" fer Bummell?

CALEB. Why you did—or at least, I thought you acted so, Tilly. (*doggedly*). As for the name of Emmons being prettier than Bummell, well, thet's considering. There be worse names in the world than Bummell, and when it comes to Emmons—which always reminds me of lemons, (and sounds sour, like old Emmons undoubtedly wuz), why I'd change it, Tilly.

TILLY (*rising with spirit*). He was not so *old*, Mr. Bummell.

CALEB. He would be sixty if he wuz living, Tilly; he would be sixty if he wuz a day.

TILLY (*tapping fan against knuckles and pacing stage with suppressed feeling*). And how old are you, Mr. Bummell?

CALEB (*evasively*). Well, I'm not sixty—besides, I'm forty-four around the chest, and thet's something, no matter what a man's age is.

TILLY. You are fifty-nine, Mr. Bummell.

CALEB (*rising irately*). Stop calling me Bummell, Tilly.

TILLY (*in same tone*). You are fifty-nine, Mr. Bummell, and my dear, lost Emmons was spryer than you air.

CALEB (*hotly*). I don't know about thet, Tilly; he wuz younger when he died. Besides, he was club footed. Old Em-

mons hed more escapes from falling in this world than any man I ever heard on. His toes wuz always striking his heels, Tilly.

TILLY (*indignantly*). Mr. Bummell! (JANE and SUE *peep around bower with excitement*.)

CALEB (*emphatically*). And old Emmons was a trifle—jest a trifle—bowlegged. Now I ain't bowlegged nor pigeon-toed, Tilly.

TILLY (*wrathfully*). You? You're worse. You've got false teeth and dyed whiskers.

CALEB (*startled*). Hoighty! I hev, hev I? Why, what hez come over you, Tilly? Remember, I'm forty-four—

TILLY (*interrupting in great wrath*). Your forty-four around the chest is all wind, and you are as vain as an old peacock. There now; you will abuse my dear, lost Emmons! You will say he wuz—I won't repeat it Mr. Bummell. I'm done with you, Caleb, (*goes up c.*) and when Tilly Emmons changes her name for Bummell, which rhymes with—I don't know what it does rhyme with—you'll know it. So good bye, and good riddance (*with emphasis*) Mr. Bummell. (*exit c., and off R. 3 E. shaking with wrath. SUE and JANE leave rose bower and look after her, then at each other in amazement.*)

CALEB (*helplessly*). Well, hoighty-toighty! I'm jiggered! (*sinks on bench at c. mopping forehead with red handkerchief.*)

SUE (*to JANE, pointing vindictively at CALEB*). Now we have him, Jane!

JANE (*coming down on L. of CALEB, spitefully*). So you thought Tilly Emmons would marry you, Caleb Bummell? (CALEB *gazes helplessly at her over handkerchief*.)

SUE (*coming down on CALEB's right*). You; the meanest man in Hadley. (CALEB *turns toward SUE*.)

JANE (*spitefully*). Who has worn the same hat six years.

SUE. Who don't vote, 'cause of the poll tax. Remember, Jane, how he went on at his wife's funeral?

JANE. Said he would néver marry agin because thet woman hed been so dear to him.

SUE. Expensive, he meant.

CALEB (*who has been gazing helplessly from one to the other, starting to his feet*). Stop it!

SUE (*vindictively*). False teeth!

JANE. False beard!

CALEB (*shouting*). Hags! (*turns, putting fingers in ears, and running up stage c., spinsters closely following him*.)

JANE. Forty-four around the chest—

SUE (*shrieking in his ear*). All wind.

JANE. Old peacock! (CALEB *wildly throws hands above his*

head and exits R. 3 E.; SUE and JANE following with jibes and cries.)
(Enter DUDLEY BRANT on piazza of house at R; thoughtful and despondent in demeanor; book in hand. Stands leaning against piazza column looking off L. 3 E.)

SOFT MUSIC.

DUD. (*musingly*). How happy have been these past three years! How bright with the sunshine of her presence. It is nearly over. In a few hours Hadley will know her no longer; I will know her no longer. The light which goes out of our community leaves my own life darkened as well. (*descends steps slowly and crosses to table, R. c. resting book against table*). Why does happiness deny herself to some men? Twice that phantom called Love has beckoned me on; yet, each time as I sprang forward, she eluded my caress. Truly my destiny has played strange tricks with me. (*leaves book on table R. c. and crosses sitting in rose bower L. c.*) Oh, for the life, the strength of ten years ago! I could woo her then as women would be wooed. But, no; it is not to be. This mask,—my face—proclaims me an aged man before my time. Deep lines, gray hairs, are here, and young and healthy love cares not for these.

(Enter KATE, L. 3 E. unobserved by DUDLEY and through hedge at C.)

KATE (*looking at house*). Dudley ill, and wishes to speak with me? (*pauses for a moment on piazza steps, and then ascends steps and enters house at R.*)

DUD. Were I younger, I might have hopes of her. God knows my love is not impaired with age. But how can she know that? (*buries face in hands. Re-enter KATE from house at R.*)

KATE. There is no one within. (*descends steps, looking towards rose-bower*). Perhaps he is there. (*crosses to bower with slight hesitation. Stops on seeing DUDLEY. Then goes up to him putting hand on his shoulder and speaking softly*). Dudley?

DUD. (*looking up joyfully*). Kate!

KATE (*gazing into his face anxiously*). Are you ill?

DUD. Perhaps. The disease is mental; though body and soul must suffer with it. One physician can cure me, and one alone.

KATE. I do not understand.

DUD. How should you? (*making room for her beside him.*) Come, Kate, sit here.

KATE (*holding back, and leaning slightly against edge of bower*). Polly sent for me—

DUD. (*interrupting happily*). She shall have a new dress for that.

KATE. Saying you were ill and wished to see me. Here is

her note. (*hands him note as DUDLEY looks up with puzzled expression.*)

DUD. (*after glancing at paper*). Either Polly is mad or I unconscious of my illness.

KATE (*in voice cold with disappointment*). It was a mistake, then? You did not wish to speak with me. (*turns slowly going up stage.*)

DUD. (*rising quickly*). Wait, Katharine. (*KATE pauses at R. c.; DUDLEY approaches speaking gently*). I have much to say—so much, indeed, that I scarcely trust these unmeaning words. (*hesitates*) I blundered yesterday; my speech was cold and trivial. Perhaps it was Polly who made me nervous—perhaps yourself?

KATE (*looking up*). I, Dudley?

DUD. Yes; I cannot explain.—(*hesitates*) I—cannot explain. (*clasps hands behind him and turns away, pacing stage at R. KATE leans with hand against rustic bench c. regarding him. DUDLEY turns.*) We have spent many hours in this garden, Katharine!

KATE. Many, Dudley.

DUD. Our walks, our conversations, were delightful. You enjoyed those walks, did you not? (*KATE nods her head slowly, looking into his face earnestly as though to read his feelings*). To me, those hours were the happiest in a lifetime. If you enjoyed them as much as I, I should ask—(*abruptly*). But there—I am a fool! You go away to-day; a new life is before you. New acquaintances; new friends await you there—friends more congenial by age and taste. (*with voice which falters slightly*). You will marry, Kate.—

KATE (*regarding him with large, quiet eyes*). I shall never marry!

DUD. (*with some vehemence*). You should: it is the law of Heaven. Somewhere in this world, a man needs your aid and comfort. You will bring him the happiness he deserves. Do you know, Katharine, I am jealous of that man. Were I ten years younger you should not leave like this. (*recovering himself*) But there,—my words are foolish. You had better leave me, Kate. (*turns away and crosses R. to table.*)

KATE (*taking a few steps toward him*). DUDLEY!

DUD. (*half turning and idly toying with back on table*). Yes?

KATE. Before leaving, I must ask your forgiveness. I insulted you that day at Berwyn; I insulted *you*—my best friend. Can you ever forget those words?

DUD. You were not yourself that morning, Kate.

KATE. You'll never know my humiliation when you defended me after what I said. It was so brave; so noble.

DUD. (*protesting quietly*). No, Kate—No!

KATE. It was. I shall remember you as the best and noblest man I have ever known. (DUDLEY *turns quickly*. KATE *extends her hand*). Good bye.

DUD. (*taking KATE's hand in both of his*). Not yet—not yet, Katharine.

KATE. I must.—I leave Hadley to-day.

DUD. (*retaining her hand absently*). To be sure. (*suddenly*). You will miss the farm, Kate. Do you remember you once told me it would break your heart to leave Berwyn?

KATE (*looking up at him*). My heart is near breaking.

DUD. (*patting her hand gently*). Little woman—little woman. You will miss your friends: Hadley holds many friends for you.

KATE (*with tears in eyes*). I shall miss my friends.

DUD. (*sitting with KATE at c.*) Where do you go, Katharine?

KATE. First to visit a friend in Reading.

DUD. And after that?

KATE. Then to the little homestead I told you of.—That alone is mine. Anne will live with me.

DUD. But how will you live? What is your income?

KATE. I can sew.—I can earn my living.

DUD. No, Kate! You must not turn seamstress. The work is wearing. It will stamp harsh lines on that pretty face.

KATE. There is nothing else that I can do.

DUD. Why go to Reading at all?

KATE. You forget; I have no other home.

DUD. (*rising and pacing stage at R.*). Ah, yes—yes. (*pausing*) Kate?

Kate. Yes, Dudley?

DUD. (*with less confidence*). Kate, I was thinking—(*aside*). Strange that I am so nervous upon this subject. I know Kate well, too. Yet her youth, her beauty, cry out against it. (*aloud, awkwardly*). Kate, I—. (*aside*) I cannot—I feel so old beside her!

KATE. You wish to say something, Dudley?

DUD. (*aside*). Ten thousand would I give to be ten years younger!

KATE (*rising*). Once again, then—good-bye.

DUD. (*turning quickly*). One moment; Kate; I have not finished. Indeed I have not begun. Sit there, Katharine, while I think.

KATE (*sitting once more on bench, c.*). What is it you wish to say?

DUD. (*aside*). At least it will do no harm to speak. She can do no more than scorn my offer. (*aloud*) Kate?

KATE (*quietly*). Yes?

DUD. (*aside, helplessly*). Yes! (*aloud, suddenly*) Katharine, do I look old?

KATE (*smiling*). What a foolish question.

DUD. I know it is foolish; nevertheless, I wish an answer. Miss Perkins thinks I am aging rapidly. Is that your opinion, Kate?

KATE (*smiling*). Why, then; of course you are old—

DUD. (*raising his hand and interrupting her with feeling*). I am old, then—to you. (*turns away and leans with one hand against piazza rail with downbent head*. KATE studies him attentively, then crosses R. to his side.)

KATE (*anxiously*). Dudley?

DUD. (*in hollow voice*). Yes?

KATE. Have I offended with my words?

DUD. (*with face turned away*). No, Kate—no.

KATE (*anxiously*). I am afraid I have. Why—(*leans slightly against his arm while trying to look into his face*. With feeling). Oh, I have offended you, Dudley!

DUD. It is nothing, Kate—nothing.

KATE (*quickly*). I see.—You failed to hear me out. I was going to say you were old to a certain extent, but wiser and better than other men. The best, the kindest man I have ever known.

DUD. (*with face still turned away*). Rather fatherly, eh, Kate? I understand.

KATE (*turning away from him with feeling*). No—you do not understand. You hurt me by misinterpreting my words like that.

DUD. (*turning quickly*). I would not hurt you if salvation itself depended on it. I wished to say this! You have no home; accept mine. It needs you—I need you. Will you be my wife, Kate? (*as KATE steps back, DUD. wavers, then crosses R. standing at foot of piazza steps, with his back turned to her; hands clasped behind him, with fingers interlocking nervously*. KATE, her face lit happily, takes a step towards him, then stops. *Pause*.)

KATE (*aside*). Well, why doesn't he turn? (*pause*) Why doesn't he look at me? (*pause*) This is the queerest behaviour—(*as if suddenly comprehending and speaking with great feeling*) Oh, I see—it is his generosity. He would sacrifice himself to give me a home. I thought—(*hesitates*.)

DUD. (*half turning*). Well, Kate, I am waiting.

KATE (*sadly*). No, Dudley; I thank you deeply, heartily, but I could not consent. I shall never forget your kindness. Good bye, sir. (*goes up L. c.; DUDLEY watching her*. As she reaches opening in hedge at C. DUD. suddenly slaps book against table R. c.)

DUD. (*harshly*). Kate! (KATE *pauses*). You still love that—puppy?

KATE (*quietly*). What do you mean?

DUD. That fellow—Kingsley!

KATE (*shaking head slowly*). No; I put him out of my heart that night.

DUD. Then, why won't you marry me?

KATE (*facing him*). Because I could not consent to the sacrifice, Dudley Brant.

DUD. Is it a sacrifice? An elderly man can love a woman as tenderly as a younger one.

KATE. I did not mean sacrifice on my part.

DUD. There is no other. We should not do so badly, Kate. You like the farm here; you would be near your old home of Berwyn. Or, if you preferred, we would travel. My life would be devoted to your happiness. (KATE *turns away thoughtfully*) I am twenty years your senior, Katharine. I know the difference is most too much; I cannot blame you for shrinking from me. (*sits on bench c. facing audience with face pressed against hands. KATE regards him attentively, then comes down, putting her hand on his shoulder*).

KATE (*tenderly*). How you have misunderstood me!

DUD. (*with face still hidden*.) I should have known better, but I could not help it. I am a man, and I had to love you, Kate.

KATE. Dudley! (*sits beside him with hands in lap. Pause.*)

DUD. Have you gone, Katharine?

KATE. No, I am thinking.

DUD. Thinking will not bring the remedy. Don't mind me; I am punished for my presumption in loving you.

KATE (*in low hesitating voice*). Dudley; have you forgotten about my not being a Berwyn? My birth is uncertain.

DUD. (*who has removed hands from face, but still sits with down-bent head*). I care not about your birth, Kate.

KATE. But you should—you *must* care. Other people will. Something—later—might be proven about me. You would regret your marriage to a woman without a name.

DUD. (*looking up, quickly*). Is that the obstacle, Katharine?

KATE (*rising and moving away, L.*). Yes;—what other could there be?

DUD. (*rising and speaking firmly*). Kate! Come here!

KATE No,—you are acting hastily, now Dudley. (DUDLEY *steps towards her as she moves away*.)

DUD. Katharine—Katharine! Do you hesitate for that? I thought it was the difference between our ages. A man does

not marry a woman for her pedigree; he marries her for what she is. (*KATE shakes her head.*)

KATE. The world is less generous in its judgment. You would be reproached for taking such a woman into your home. You would learn to regret your marriage.

DUD. I can still handle my cane, Katharine; no one will speak against my wife, I promise you. Are your objections overruled? (*pause. KATE silent; with bowed head. DUDLEY steps to her side. Tenderly.*) Come, little woman; my home needs your cheering presence. You are the one gleam of sunshine in the pathway of life before me. My heart is saddened and will grow old. Let me take the sunshine into it. I crave its warmth; its love; its happiness.

KATE (*turning to him with loving eyes*). Dudley!

DUD. (*folding her in his arms*). My Kate!

(*Enter DR. PEABODY and POLLY on piazza at R.*)

DR. P. (*mischievously*). Do we interrupt?

DUD. (*looking up*). You do,—you do! Go away, immediately! (*extending hand to PEABODY who descends steps with POLLY*). There, old fellow—congratulate me. The sweetest woman in the world has consented to make my life happy.

DR. P. (*shaking DUDLEY's hand*). I cannot agree with you about the sweetest woman, Dudley; there is Polly, you know.

POLLY (*kissing KATE*). I'm so glad! I'm sure I don't know what would have become of Mr. Dudley. I've been worrying about him all morning.

DUD. And writing notes about him; eh, Polly, my dear?

DR. P. (*aside to DUDLEY*). For Polly's sake I have consented to take Miss Perkins into our house.

DUD. (*shaking DOCTOR's hand*). My dear generous fellow! (*in DOCTOR's ear*) Look out for squalls. (*DOCTOR smiles and turns away to converse with POLLY at R. c. who has been tugging at his sleeve. To KATE*) Katharine, I think those young people would prefer to be alone. Come! (*leads KATE to bower c.*) Now if Peabody had the least bit of good sense, he would not intrude at such a moment. A good fellow is Peabody, but—(*shakes head and finishes conversation in mimic; sitting with KATE in bower.*)

(*Enter CALEB BUMMELL and TILLY EMMONS at c.*)

CALEB (*in loud voice*). A woman oughter marry, Tilly. What else did the Lord make 'em for?

TILLY. I s'pose you're right, Caleb. I once said I'd never marry again; (*resignedly*) but a woman changes her mind on that subject.

CALEB (*to DR. PEABODY*). Hullo, Peabody—that wuz a

good position you fell into. How's Miss Kate after her fright last night?

KATE (*as DUDLEY and she step from bower*). Very well, I thank you, Caleb.

CALEB (*turning*). Oh, you're there! (*starts with surprise on seeing KATE's hand resting confidently in DUDLEY's*). Hullo!

DUD. Caleb, Mrs. Emmons—congratulate me. Miss Berwyn has consented to become my wife.

CALEB (*shaking DUDLEY's hand*). Well, I'm jiggered!

TILLY. Now, who'd a' thought it! (*aside to CALEB*). Poor Sue—she always planned to get Dudley.

CALEB (*with fine contempt*). Sue? Well, Tilly, I always said Dudley wuz a lucky man; and now I know it.

TILLY. Lucky in getting Kate, you mean?

CALEB. No, Tilly—lucky in *not getting* Sue Perkins; *that's* what I mean. (*DUDLEY and KATE have walked up to hedge L. C. B.*)

DUD. (*looking off L.*). Hi! Look at this! Here comes Jane Holly and running at that.

(*Enter JANE HOLLY C. excitedly waving paper.*)

JANE. Listen! Everybody listen! I'm going to be married.

OMNES (*in tone of great surprise*). Married?

CALEB (*dumbfounded*). Who to?

JANE. To Jem Struthers.

TILLY. Old Jem, who has one eye?

CALEB (*turning on TILLY as if she had solved a problem*). Thet's it, Tilly; the poor man can't see. I heard his other eye was affected.

JANE (*primly smoothing out paper*). Listen to what he says: (*reading*) "Miss Jane Holly: If it's true what I hear that you want to get married, well then, I'm your man." (*looking up*) Thet's ruther sudden, now, ain't it? But it's just like Jem. (*reads*) "I married once and wuz a fool, ez you know, and I reckon I'm going to be a fool once agin—

CALEB (*interrupting grimly*). There's no doubt about thet!

JANE (*continuing*). "However, thet's for you to say, and as the youngsters need some sort of a mother, I ask you to come and take charge. The eating's not fine, but you'll find plenty of it. I remain, ma'am, Jem Struthers." (*JANE folds paper*) There!

DUD. Will you accept him, Miss Holly?

JANE. Accept him? Of course.—(*anxiously*) He can't change his mind now, can he, Mr. Dudley? (*DUDLEY shakes his head, smiling*).

CALEB. There's no escaping—Lord help him!

JANE (*looking around*). But where's Sue? I must tell Sue the news.

(Enter SUE PERKINS at c.)

SUE. I've heard it, Jane Holly. That man couldn't do worse if he tried. (*crosses and ascends piazza steps R.*)

JANE (*going up c. fanning wrathfully*). I don't know, Sue—he might have asked you. We're going to be married next Thursday. (*exit c. bobbing head vigorously.*)

SUE. (*surveying group at c. from piazza*). So you're all going to be married? Thank the Lord I am not. I'm the only respectable woman left in Hadley. (*exit in house at R. letting door slam after her.*)

CALEB (*gazing after SUE and shaking head*). Thet woman—thet woman! (*comes down c. to bower, where DUDLEY and KATE are conversing with wrapt attention*). Now, Dudley Brant, what air you going to do about Billy? (*DUDLEY and KATE pay no attention*). Thet man is a firebrand in this community; and you air in a position to put thet firebrand out. So I say, jail him. (*DUDLEY pays no attention.*)

TILLY (*mildly*). That would be putting him in, don't you think, Caleb?

CALEB (*ignoring TILLY's pun and turning to DR. PEABODY who is conversing with POLLY at R. c.*). And you'll agree with me; won't you, Dr. Peabody? (*DOCTOR pays no attention. CALEB turns impatiently to TILLY*) Well, everybody is durned unsociable, to-day, ain't they, Tilly?

TILLY (*moving closer to him*). They're in love, Caleb; I wouldn't disturb them ef I were you.

CALEB (*obstinately*). They may be in love, but thet still entitles other people to some consideration. Now, I'm in love, Tilly, but I ain't deaf and dumb over it. (*raising voice and turning toward DUDLEY*) I was saying, Dudley Brant, that Western Billy is a firebrand,—

DR. P. (*at R.*). What is that you were saying, Caleb?

CALEB (*turning eagerly to DR. PEABODY, who is immediately engrossed in conversation with POLLY*). Exactly; now you will agree with me, doctor, when I say thet—(*DR PEABODY never notices and CALEB turns in disgust to TILLY*) It's no use, Tilly—they air beyond the powers of reasonin'. Perhaps we hed better leave them to themselves.

DUDLEY (*suddenly recollecting that CALEB had spoken*). I agree with you entirely, Caleb. (*returns to conversation with KATE. CALEB jabs his hat viciously on his head.*)

CALEB (*grimly*). Come on, Tilly.—We're going home. (*exit CALEB and TILLY arm in arm at c.*)

POLLY (*at table R. c. regarding DR. PEABODY*). I am so happy Dr. Peabody.

DR. P. So am I, Polly. All I wanted was my Polly and a practice; and it now looks as though I soon should have both. Eh? (*POLLY whispers to DOCTOR and points to DUDLEY and KATE engaged in conversation in bower. POLLY nods; both she and DOCTOR rise and tiptoe R.*) Perhaps they would prefer the whole garden? (*as POLLY is about to ascend piazza steps*) Not that way, Polly.

POLLY (*turning*). Why not, Dr. Peabody?

DR. P. (*indicating house, and pursing lips*). Auntie Sue! Come! (*passes arm about POLLY's waist and they exit around house R. 2 E.*)

KATE (*moving closer to DUDLEY*). They have gone, Dudley.

DUD. (*folding an arm about her*). I like this much better. I think we shall live in the strictest seclusion. My Katharine is all of the world that I care for just now.

KATE. Dudley, will you answer one question?

DUD. (*fondly*). One hundred, little woman.

KATE. When did you discover you loved me?

DUD. I cannot say. Perhaps that day when I feared I should lose you; perhaps that night in the orchard when I stood under your window.

KATE (*nestling to him*). You were so brave, so strong in my defense that night.

DUD. It was more love than bravery. And you, Kate?

KATE. I discovered it when you defended me. I see now that I loved you long ago; but that foolish girl-passion blinded my eyes. (*pause*) Dudley, was your passion for that—other woman foolish?

DUD. Kate, Kate; the world has taught us the same hard lesson and brought us together with its teaching. Let us thank God for it.

CURTAIN.

MEDITATIONS



GREAT MEN—AND OTHERS.

Every young man of intelligence is a golden possibility; but it is only the exceptional one who can elevate himself above the drudgery of his surroundings and rise to a grand accomplishment.

Poverty is the best training a young man can have. If he has ability it will stimulate him to greater effort. If he is a sluggard it will protect him from indulgence in vice. It is rich men's sons who have the greatest temptations.

The men who conquer the world are those who can take the most punishment. The most dangerous pugilist is he who rises from every knock-down and continues the battle.

Great men *make* their opportunities. The world is rife with possibilities for the master mind who knows how to utilize them.

Conditions as they exist are so much clay awaiting the hand of the sculptor. All great men are sculptors. They take the clay and model it.

The first requisite for success is a sound body. Many men have the ability to succeed but the imperfect machinery of their bodies breaks down under the strain and an early grave claims them.

Cultivate a cheerful disposition. Many men are soured by the trials of life and the brilliancy of their intellect is marred by a hateful exterior. A cheerful man is a greater inspiration to the people with whom he comes in contact than a dozen long-faced geniuses.

Every man is blessed who has the use of his eyes, a straight back and a home he can call his own. Compare his lot with that of the blind, the cripple and the wanderer.

The simplest things are blessings beyond cost,
Which man appreciates the most—when lost.

Nothing is lost in this world. Our lightest expression may reach to the ends of the earth, and influence a thousand lives in generations to come.

Health, a contented disposition, and a loving wife, are the three greatest blessings God can bestow upon man. How many ruin their prospect of these joys by their own carelessness.

To become successful a man must have a certain amount of ability, a certain amount of tact, a certain amount of courage, and a large amount of perseverance.

When you have an opportunity, make the most of it. Throw all your ability into the scale and ten chances to one the balance will fall in your favor.

It has truly been said that a rolling stone gathers no moss. Men who make many changes in business are not successful men. Stick to one trade or one business house, study every detail of it and make yourself the genius of that occupation. There is a fortune in everything.

Nothing is impossible to the man who dares.

Success comes easily to some men. If they have a shadow of ability influential friends are at hand ready to publish it to the world. The great strain falls upon those who, without assistance attempt to scale the Wall of Indifference. Defeat and disappointment will be their daily companions, but they are the greater men if they reach the top in spite of this, and their victory will resound through the ages.

Great men arrive at decisions quickly. He who dallies is either a feeble thinker, a sluggard or a coward.

Great philanthropists may be said to *purchase* immortality.

Bear yourself well before your fellow men. Men who have great ability *must* be conscious of it, but it should be their aim to conceal that consciousness. Truly great men do this. It is the little fellows possessing only a few sparks of the divine fire who make the most smoke about it.

Truly great men write from no standpoint but the standpoint of truth. Great men have no prejudices and no party. They hold themselves above the meaner passions, partisanship and aspirations of mankind and by their lives and their works preach the sermon of Love. Their duty in this world is to brand wrong, but not to condemn the wrong-doer. God alone has the power to judge. Great men are truly humble, for they, above all, most appreciate the littleness of man.

Greatness is reserved for few:
But *good acts* every man can do.

MEN AND WOMEN.

Man is an easy mortal. The woman who most wants him will get him,—unless a more attractive woman has her eye on him.

Little women marry big men, handsome women marry plain men, and clever women invariably take blockheads. Thus Nature evens up matters in their children.

Intellectual women do not always make good housewives. A great English actress has said that marriage and art don't agree. She was probably speaking from experience.

A man arrives at conclusions by what he is pleased to call his reasoning powers; a woman is mainly influenced by her intuition. Reasoning often runs astray; intuition seldom does. The man who despises the intuitive reasoning of a woman is a fool.

More men owe their success to the good counsel of their wives than the world has any idea of.

In nine cases out of ten the plain woman has more in her than the beauty. There is a reason for this. All women desire the admiration of men and the plain woman finds she must cultivate every accomplishment to obtain this; whereas her beautiful sister has no such incentive.

The woman who says she does not like admiration is soured by the consciousness that she cannot obtain it.

Don't rush into matrimony. It is an obtuse knot that holds for a life-time.

Every woman is as beautiful as she makes her disposition, else why is it that we are repelled by some handsome faces and find the plain features of others attractive.

Never marry a man to reform him. It is a hopeless undertaking.

Women are the greatest hero worshippers. The sorriest rascal in the land has at least one woman who believes him endowed with superior qualities.

By the time a woman is twenty-five she begins to have a fair understanding of men. Marriage under twenty is perilous.

When all is told, the greatest prize that falls to man in life
Is she who shares his daily cares, the loving, thoughtful wife.

*EXTRACT FROM
THE "MEDITATIONS ON RELIGION."*

O, man, thy greater experience will prove that nothing worldly can content thee.

Wealth thou mayest have, and Honors, and the thousand luxuries attendant on these, but thy heart will still hunger.

Worship not these idols which men have fashioned; but know that there is but one work truly deserving of thy powers.

Live for others.

Study, work, sacrifice thy life for the betterment of thy fellow men.

If thou hast wealth distribute the greater part among them.

If thou hast kindliness of manner and temperament, let it shine among men and make the world brighter.

If thou canst teach religion and convince others of God's omnipotence, teach with thy might.

If thou canst write a great book, or paint a great picture, or put together a composition in music which will inspire men to nobility of thought and character, employ these wondrous talents.

And if thou hast no genius of the intellect cultivate a genius of the soul.

Perfect thyself and lead a good life, and it will be a greater lesson than all the books, paintings and music in the world, to those around thee.

And let nothing deter thee, but work with great spirit and cheerfulness.

For God is waiting to reward His servant.



